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Divine Interiors

Experience churches in the age of Rubens

Edited by Claire Baisier

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With contributions by Claire Baisier,
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BAI

Museum Mayer van den Bergh

Contents

Foreword

Philip Heylen
Vice Mayor for Culture, Economy, City Maintenance and Property Management

Fritz Mayer van den Bergh (1858–1901) was an inspired collector of largely medieval and Renaissance art. Following his untimely death, his mother, Henriëtte Mayer van den Bergh, had a museum built to house his collection, and the general public have been able to admire his legacy there since 1904. In tribute to its founder, the Museum Mayer van den Bergh is dedicated to supporting the private collectors of today.

The French collector Bernard Maillet has made the study of paintings of church interiors his life's work. His collection has been gathered together over some 40 years, and in 2012 he published an extensive history of church interiors from the Southern and Northern Netherlands that has now become the bible for architectural painting in the Low Countries. At the end of 2016 he will be donating all his documentation to the Rubenianum – a centre at the Rubens House in Antwerp that is dedicated to the study of Rubens and Flemish art – where his research will be continued in an ideal setting. A considerable number of paintings from his collection will be on display during the exhibition *Divine Interiors*, complemented by paintings, prints and drawings from other private collections as well as from major museums in Belgium and abroad. Dr Claire Baisier, the exhibition's curator, devoted her doctoral thesis to this area, specifically the documentary importance of church interiors by the Antwerp School under the Spanish Netherlands (1585–1713). Collector and art historian have joined forces to give a platform to their commonly held passion and to share that passion with the public.

The exhibition will show how St Charles Borromeo's Church looked before the great fire, how the Cathedral of Our Lady was restored after Calvinist rule, and how churches were used for networking, celebrating, gossip-

ing, begging and even playing. After all, a church was not only a house of prayer, but also a meeting place for the whole community of Antwerp. And architectural painters then – equivalent to today's photographers – were perfectly placed to witness this flourishing activity.

The early music ensemble Graindelavoix has made new recordings, especially for *Divine Interiors*, of polyphonic music written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and published by the Antwerp printers Plantin and Phalesius. It will be heard for the first time at the exhibition and will be an essential part of the total experience. Thanks to the cooperation of the non-profit organisation Monumental Churches of Antwerp, visitors can compare in situ the paintings of the past with the reality of the present day. Multimedia also allows some lost architectural gems to be brought back to life, albeit in virtual reality. Past and present enter into dialogue for a fascinating project in which the visual arts, music and tourism are brought together.

We would like to thank the lenders of works for their confidence in the Museum Mayer van den Bergh and for their cooperation with this exhibition; the members of the academic committee for their expert input; the sponsors who, thanks to their financial and material support, have given a helping hand to this venture; and the permanent staff and trainees of the museum whose great enthusiasm and determination have brought it to fruition. Director Claire Baisier deserves heartfelt thanks because she has seized the opportunity to realise this project and to introduce the public to a less familiar genre, yet one that is so important to the City of Antwerp.

Claire Baisier
Director of the Museum Mayer van den Bergh

Architectural painting is most familiar in works by painters from the Northern Netherlands such as Pieter Saenredam (1597–1665) and Emanuel de Witte (1617–92). However, it is less well known that the foundations on which this genre was built were laid in sixteenth-century Antwerp. It is commonly believed that, apart from the Neeffs studio, little of the 'Antwerp school' was left following the departure of both the Vredeman de Vries and Van Steenwijck father and son duos. Nevertheless, German artists such as Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg and Anton Günther Ghering came to settle in Antwerp, enrolling in the city's Guild of St Luke in order to dedicate themselves exclusively to architectural painting. Proof that this was quite a thriving school is borne out by the hundreds of paintings by Antwerp's architectural artists that have survived to this day and are much sought after in the art market.[1]

The oldest known interior of an existing church dates from 1573.[2] Hendrik van Steenwijck I painted the interior of Aachen Cathedral when he was staying there in exile and met with Hans Vredeman de Vries (fig. 1). The architectural painting genre emerged from the tracts written by Hans Vredeman de Vries on architecture and perspective, notably *Architectura* (1577) and *Perspective* (1604–5) (cats. 3–4). Consequently, the first architectural works aimed chiefly to render the perspective of both palaces and ecclesiastical buildings as precisely as possible.

After about 1575, church interiors painted in Antwerp were brought onto the market in large numbers by Abel Grimmer, Hendrik Steenwijck I and II, and Peeter Neeffs I, followed later by Peeter Neeffs II, Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg and Anton Günther Ghering, to name but a few. At the very end of the turbulent sixteenth century – following the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 – paintings of church interiors became popular in both the Protestant North and Catholic South, and not only because they packed a religious punch. They also had value as souvenirs, especially those depicting the Cathedral of Our Lady or the Jesuit Church. The buyers of such paintings were undoubtedly attracted first and foremost by their perspective, the detailed reproduction of the architecture and ornamentation – in short, their decorative value. For that matter, such paintings included not only church interiors but also secular architecture, such as palaces and rooms housing art collections – though these were far more limited in number.

The majority of interiors representing existing churches, especially Antwerp's cathedral, were mass produced for the wider art market. They almost always repeat the same composition, although populated with different clusters of people painted by an artist specialising in figures. In nearly three quarters of cases, these mass-produced items were left unsigned and undated by the artist. To this day they remain very much in demand because of their decorative appeal. Some of these interiors are rendered in such detail that they provide us with a precise idea of what a building actually looked like at the time it was painted. These paintings are unique documents for research into the interiors of both existing and lost churches in Antwerp. Those with the greatest documentary value were painted by the German immigrants Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg and Anton Günther Ghering. Although neither of them was as prolific as Peeter Neeffs I and II, they are no less interesting. Owing to their accuracy and feeling for detail, paintings by both these men, along with those by Jacob Balthazar Peeters, provide an inexhaustible source of reference for the appearance of seventeenth-century churches, primarily in Antwerp.

Fig. 1
Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Interior of Aachen Cathedral*, 1573, oil on panel, 52 × 73.5 cm, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, inv. 10632

Architectural painting as a genre died out almost completely in the early eighteenth century, only to re-emerge in the nineteenth century within the context of Revivalism, thanks to artists such as Mathieu Joseph Karel Hunin (1770–1851), Joseph Chrétien Nicolié (1791–1854), Jules Victor Genisson (1805–60), Alfred Delaunois (1875–1941) and André-Joseph Minguet (1818–60), to name some of the most important.[3]

Nowadays, hundreds of these paintings of church interiors are preserved throughout the world, but the great majority of them are in private ownership and are thus difficult to track down. This exhibition provides a unique opportunity to view and study a considerable number of such previously uncelebrated pictures, because more than half of the works on display come from private collections. These are complemented by important works from Belgian and foreign museums, enabling us to present a highly satisfactory overview of the Antwerp school's production. We are enormously grateful to all the lenders for putting their trust in us, and we hope that as a result Antwerp's architectural painting will become more widely known and better appreciated.

NOTES

1 This contribution has been based in large part on Baisier 2008.

2 Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Interior of Aachen Cathedral* (*Zicht in de Dom van Aken*), panel, 52 × 73.5 cm, signed and dated '1573/HvS', Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, inv. 10632.

3 The last church interiors were dated 1721. These are two companion pieces by Jacob Balthazar Peeters, from the collection of Baron H.A.H. Reedtz-Thott, Gavnø (Denmark): *Interior of St Charles Borromeo's Church* (*Interieurzicht van de Sint-Carolus Borromeuskerk*) and *Baroque Church Interior with Organ in Choir Rood Loft* (*Barok kerkinterieur met orgel op koordoksaal*), oil on canvas, 85.1 × 119.4 cm, signed, Christie's, London, 9 July 1976, lot 125.

Essays

Stylistic development in paintings of Antwerp church interiors around 1600

Thomas Fusenig and Ulrich Heinen

Between the 1560s and 1586, Antwerp was the cradle of perspectival painting in Northern Europe. The two protagonists of the new pictorial genre were Hans Vredeman de Vries (1525/6–c. 1609) and his pupil Hendrik van Steenwijck I (c. 1550–1603). The section devoted to the history of style in Hans Jantzen's classic *Das niederländische Architekturbild* (Netherlandish Architectural Painting, 1910), begins with a chapter on 'Die Antwerpener Maler' (The Painters of Antwerp) in which Vredeman and Van Steenwijck make their appearance.[1] The chapter's title, however, is geographically misleading in more ways than one. Vredeman and Van Steenwijck were both natives of the northern provinces, namely Friesland and Overijssel. What is more, they were active in Antwerp for only parts of their careers. Vredeman came to the city in the mid–1560s, Van Steenwijck presumably not until several years later. Their sons Paul Vredeman (1567–1617) and Hendrik van Steenwijck II (1580–1640), who were their most important successors, were both born in Antwerp but fled from the metropolis on the Scheldt with their families at a young age. Vredeman and Van Steenwijck left Antwerp in 1586 after the Spanish governor, Alessandro Farnese, had reconquered the rebellious town the previous year for the Catholic King Philip II of Spain. From that time onward, Hans Vredeman and his family led a peripatetic life in the Holy Roman Empire. Hendrik van Steenwijck I settled permanently in Frankfurt am Main.[2] There have been frequent speculations in art-historical literature that the two sons later sojourned in Antwerp, but no documentary evidence of such stays has yet been found.

In the years immediately after 1586, Abel Grimmer (c. 1565–c. 1620), who attained the status of free master in 1592, was therefore the only artist who occasionally painted church interiors, even if his workshop mainly specialised in landscapes.[3] Jantzen pays as little attention to Grimmer as he does to the prominent Antwerp figure specialist Sebastiaen Vrancx (1573–1647), who also made a number of architecture paintings.[4] It was not until Peeter Neeffs I (c. 1578–c. 1660) that a native painter specialised in perspectival church paintings in Antwerp. Neeffs's sons Lodewijck (1617–49?) and Peeter II (1620–c. 1675), also painters, presumably worked in his workshop from the 1630s onward.

Abel Grimmer deserves attention as a kind of intermediary figure between the founding generation of perspectival painters and those working in the seventeenth century. His father Jacob Grimmer (c. 1520–88/90) was a prominent landscape painter and a Lutheran who reconciled with the Catholic Church after the conquest of Antwerp. Yet it may have been on account of his death some time between 1588 and 1590 that the family remained in the city following the four-year ultimatum issued to the Protestants.[5] Abel Grimmer married in 1591 and was admitted to the Guild of St Luke as a master in 1592/3. In the decades that followed, his workshop produced a large number of landscapes based largely on his father's compositions, but also copied or varied engravings by Pieter Bruegel I, Hans Bol and others.

His paintings are distinguished by a prosaic charm. In their craftsmanship they resemble works from the studios of his contemporaries, Pieter Brueghel II and Louis de Caullery. Speculations that Abel Grimmer was active as an architect are old but unfounded.[6]

Grimmer's architectural paintings long went unnoticed. As already mentioned, Hans Jantzen's 1910 book makes no mention of him. The first scholar to consider him as a painter of perspectival interiors was Francine Legrand in 1957, in connection with his interior *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* of 1614 in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels.[7] It was Reine de Bertier de Sauvigny who compiled the largest number of church paintings by Abel in her book on the two Grimmers published in 1991. However, she only cursorily placed those works in the context of the genre's development. Jeremy Howarth discussed Grimmer several years ago rather parenthetically as a follower of Hendrik van Steenwijck I.[8] Most recently, Claire Baisier and Bernard G. Maillet have paid tribute to him as an architecture painter.[9]

As a source of inspiration for Abel Grimmer's church interiors, we can for the time being ignore Hans Vredeman de Vries. Hans Vredeman and his son Paul presumably did not begin painting interiors of churches until after they had left Antwerp. According to current knowledge, their earliest dated church paintings are from the years 1594 to 1596, when they were in Gdańsk (see cat. 5).[10] An interesting allegory of religious peace presumably executed in Antwerp before 1586 is an exception that proves this rule. The multi-figure composition, it should be added, depicts not a Christian church but classical temple architecture.[11]

Grimmer took inspiration above all from works by Vredeman's pupil Hendrik van Steenwijck I, painted in a period of less than a decade, between c. 1577 and his departure from Antwerp for good in 1586.[12] As was the case with his landscapes, in his architecture paintings Abel Grimmer copied and varied compositions by other artists (see cats. 7–10). In the process, he did without perspectival construction for the most part. An example is a church interior by Hendrik van Steenwijck I, which was in the collection of Count Segrè-Sartorio in Trieste before 1931 and bore a misleading Neeffs signature (fig. 1).[13] It must have been executed before Van Steenwijck's departure from Antwerp in 1586, as the figures were evidently contributed by Gillis Mostaert (1528–98), who repeatedly collaborated with Vredeman de Vries and Van Steenwijck by painting staffage for their architectural works.[14] As Mostaert is not known ever to have worked outside of Antwerp, the painting must have been executed in that city. Grimmer's church interior dated 1607 in the Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn in Mechelen is a variation on this composition by Van Steenwijck.[15]

Abel Grimmer may have signed a number of his paintings even before attaining his free mastership in 1592/3 (see cats. 7 and 9). An inventive *Temple of Jerusalem with the Healing of the Lame Man* of 1593 (fig. 2) provides evidence of his abilities and interests as a perspective painter at the start of his career. The painting does not

Fig. 1
Hendrik van Steenwijck I and Gillis Mostaert, *Interior of a Church*, Alinari Archives, Florence, Collezione Conte Segrè-Sartorio, Trieste

Fig. 2
Abel Grimmer and Hans van den Elburcht, *Temple of Jerusalem with the Healing of the Lame Man*, 1593, oil on panel, 129 × 139 cm, Private collection

depict a church interior in the strict sense, but rather an architectural fantasy in the service of the biblical theme.[16] To this end the artist combined several examples from *Scenographiae*, a series of engravings by Hans Vredeman de Vries published in 1560.[17] He furnished the work with the date 1593 in conjunction with his monogram, AG. It shows the healing of the lame beggar by St Peter at the Golden Gate of Solomon's Temple (Acts 3:1–11). The painting owes its quality in part to the well-wrought staffage by Hans van den Elburcht, who has hitherto been known only for the altarpiece he executed for the Fishmongers' Altar in Antwerp Cathedral in around 1570.[18] The painting took Grimmer to the limits of his perspectival skills. Behind the figures, the black and white floor tiles shift somewhat out of line. The diagonals receding into the pictorial depth do not form straight lines but curve slightly outward. He did not construct the painting with the aid of the distance-point method practised by Vredeman and Van Steenwijck, which would have brought about a uniform foreshortening.[19] Instead he assembled his composition from various pictorial models, merely coordinating their central vanishing point. Shortcomings in the execution of the lateral vanishing lines in the floor tiles seem to provide a good criterion by which to distinguish Grimmer's works from Hendrick van Steenwijck's. At the same time, Grimmer frequently worked more accurately. The painting of the *Virgin and Child with St Anne* in the St Lambertus Church (Sint-Lambertuskerk) in Westerlo, dated 1604 (fig. 3), likewise testifies to the limits of Grimmer's knowledge of perspective.[20] Despite the fact that the scene extends back into the chamber of the Virgin at the centre and opens up onto the landscape on either side, it achieves only a limited sense of spatial depth.

Fig. 3
Abel Grimmer, *Virgin and Child with St Anne*, 1604, oil on panel, 71.5 × 110 cm, St Lambertus Church, Westerlo

How did Abel Grimmer obtain the skills necessary for his perspectival paintings? Theoretically, he could just have managed to serve as an apprentice to Van Steenwijck before the latter left Antwerp in 1586. After all, like Abel Grimmer's father, Van Steenwijck was a Lutheran.[21] Perhaps Grimmer had the opportunity to make use of some of Van Steenwijck's workshop devices. Or perhaps he copied works by Van Steenwijck found in Antwerp collections. In the effort to arrive at a better understanding of the documentation of the perspectival models and the transfer of compositions in the Grimmer workshop, a drawing from a private Belgian collection proves instructive (cat. 10). It resembles the painting of a circular-pillar church formerly in the Crespi collection (cat. 29). The carefully executed sheet is presumably a Grimmer workshop drawing intended as a model for perspectival views.[22] By transferring such a drawing to the surface of a painting, even an artist unskilled in perspective could create a church interior.[23]

Grimmer's *Interior of St Walburga's Church* in Antwerp, bearing an authentic signature by the artist and the date 1608 on a column at the right (cat. 42), came to light several years ago. On closer inspection, a number of the flaws typical of Grimmer in the linear-perspectival depiction can also be detected here. The circular pillars are shown two-dimensionally regardless of their position, and at the edges the diagonals of the floor tiles curve slightly outward. Comparison of Grimmer's church paintings with Van Steenwijck's usually comes out to Grimmer's disadvantage. That rule does not apply to this painting, however. Despite its prosaic execution, this is the most well-wrought church interior from Grimmer's workshop, and it bears comparison with Van Steenwijck's works in the subtle aerial-perspectival transition into the diffuse brightness of the choir, the interior reflections in the shading of the right-hand row of pillars and the careful rendering of details. Grimmer achieved an astonishingly atmospheric rendering of architecture in this painting of 1608. Could this development have come about through an in-depth study of the two books in which the leading figure of perspectival painting, Hans Vredeman de Vries, published his workshop knowledge of pictorial construction in 1604/5 with the help of his son Paul?[24] However daring, one explanation for the exceptional status of the painting

Fig. 4
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral*, 1618, oil on panel, 58 × 98 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid, inv. P01605

would be that Peeter Neeffs I (c. 1578–1660), who might have been employed in Grimmer's workshop, was involved in its execution. Despite a conjecture repeatedly set forth in art-historical literature that Neeffs was apprenticed to Hendrik van Steenwijck I or II, no details of his training are known.[25] The year following the 'portrait' of St Walburga's Church, Neeffs was entered in the *Liggeren* of the Guild of St Luke. From which Antwerp painter could Neeffs have possibly learned to paint church interiors if not from Grimmer? Unlike Grimmer, Neeffs was evidently capable of constructing compositions with the distance-point method, and an outstanding architecture portrait by him is known to us from his early career: the *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral* in the Museo del Prado, Madrid, dated 1618 (fig. 4).

The significance of Peeter Neeffs I and his workshop for the Southern Netherlandish tradition of architecture painting is uncontested. In the second quarter of the seventeenth century, he apparently had a monopoly on the depiction of churches in Antwerp.[26] Numerous Antwerp staffage specialists enlivened his churches with their figures. Nevertheless, the critical study of his œuvre does not match the dissemination of his paintings.[27] The fact that there are a large number of reliably signed and dated paintings from about the mid–1620s onward obscures the problem that we are very much in the dark about the beginnings of his artistic activity. Neeffs was born in 1578 (or soon after) the son of a hapless cloth merchant and innkeeper with a large family.[28] As already mentioned, nothing is known about his training. He became a member of the Guild of St Luke in Antwerp in 1609/10. A document of February 1656 shows he was still alive then, but in 1661 Cornelis de Bie listed him among painters who were deceased.

Since Hans Jantzen, scholars have reconstructed Neeffs's early work with the aid of a beautiful *Church Interior with a Net Vault* in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden, which is allegedly signed and dated 1605.[29] Elsewhere, however, it has been shown that this painting was probably executed by Hendrik van Steenwijck II.[30] Nor is the dating of this work beyond any doubt, as the year 1605 appears on a memorial shield unassociated with any name. Uncertainties also arise with regard to other supposed early works by Neeffs.[31] A *Church Interior* bearing the date 1617, for example, known to have been

Fig. 5
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of a Church with Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery*, 1618, oil on panel, 39.7 × 54.6 cm, British Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 405505

Fig. 6
Peeter Neeffs I, *Hall Church with a Reticulated Vault*, 1616, oil on panel, 39.3 × 58.8 cm, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, inv. 1980.39

in the Richard Green Gallery in London in 1984, appeared to be a good candidate for an early work by him.[32] However, the colouration differed strongly from that of the Prado painting of 1618. Jantzen's attempt to establish paintings by Neeffs dating from as far back as the first decade of the seventeenth century is problematic, especially as the possibility of signatures being forged or added later must be taken into account in cases where the paintings are known only from photographs (see fig. 1). The earliest works bearing trustworthy dates are two from 1618. One is the *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral* in the Prado (fig. 4).[33] It is presumably an adaptation of a work by Van Steenwijck or Grimmer with a modified palette. The bluish grey of the circular pillars in the nave contrasts with the warm brown of the remaining architecture. The stone edges have been heightened in white, a device not employed by Van Steenwijck. Highlights are also discernible on the curves of the pillars. The atmospheric chiaroscuro is somewhat schematic in nature. What is more, a number of perspectival weaknesses can be detected. The first arch of the nave, for example, intersects the frontmost pillar at too high a level. The central position of the viewer, on the other hand, was already established by Grimmer.

The second work of 1618 is *Interior of a Church with Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery* in the British Royal Collection, known to have been in the collection of Charles I (fig. 5).[34] An interesting feature is the spiral staircase in the background of the scene, as this is a motif actually stemming from the Vredeman tradition and used by Paul Vredeman in a number of his paintings. In the background, on the floor of the central aisle, we find a cluster of construction lines of the kind already typical of Neeffs; they become apparent in a section where the floor tiles have been omitted for the most part and the ground left blank to accommodate the work of the figure painter. The next reliably dated and signed work is a view of the Cathedral of Our Lady of 1619.[35]

At the beginning of his career, Neeffs evidently rarely signed his paintings. Owing to the scarcity of reference works with both a signature and a date (Standard AA), to gain an understanding of his early œuvre we must resort to the second and/or third best solution – stylistically reliable dated paintings (Standard B) and reliably signed paintings in which the signature and the date appear separately (Standard A). The carefully and prosaically executed version of the *Hall Church with a Reticulated Vault* in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection in Madrid (fig. 6) is an example of a Standard B painting.[36] It is a copy of Van Steenwijck's architectural scene in Dresden of which other versions have also survived. The years 1615 and 1616 are inscribed on a plaque at the right and on a memorial shield on the pillar of the right-hand chapel. The palette is even more limited and the ground colour has an impact on the overall appearance. The small staffage figures make the church interior look larger and somewhat empty. In comparison to works by Van Steenwijck, the building exhibits very few cracks, the stones are hardly veined, and there is an epitaph portrait of a cleric in a surplice. The spiral staircase seen in the painting in the British Royal Collection also appears in the *Church Interior* in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne, which, however, bears a (rather untrustworthy) Van Steenwijck signature (fig. 7).[37] Here again, the work features an epitaph portrait of a clergyman.

For the Neeffs workshop as well, there are questions about the documentation and use of drawings in preparation for the paintings. Two drawings attributed to

Fig. 7
Peeter Neeffs I (attributed), *Interior of a Church*, oil on copper, 23.6 × 30.8 cm, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, inv. WRM 2500

Fig. 8
Peeter Neeffs I (attributed), *Interior of a Church*, pen, watercolour, 41.1 x 55.4 cm, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, inv. PK.OT.00559

Peeter Neeffs in the Amsterdam Historisch Museum testify to knowledge of the distance-point construction.[38] A further drawing on the art market ascribed to Neeffs is a copy of an engraving in Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries's *Architectura* of 1606/7.[39] The best candidate for an authentic drawing by Neeffs, however, seems to be a sheet in the Museum Plantin-Moretus (fig. 8).[40]

In addition to fundamental similarities with paintings by the Grimmer workshop, Peeter Neeffs's early works exhibit above all the influence of Van Steenwijck II, as Jantzen rightly pointed out. For the time being, however, the earliest verified datings of Neeffs's paintings must presumably be moved up to a decade later than Jantzen's assumptions. What is more, Neeffs also took orientation from works by Paul Vredeman de Vries. This is evidenced not only by the aforementioned staircase motif, but also by a signed painting on the art market which can be dated as early as 1620.[41]

Even if Neeffs was not a bona fide apprentice of Van Steenwijck II, it is possible that Van Steenwijck spent some time in Antwerp. After the signing of the twelve-year armistice between the United Provinces and the Habsburg Netherlands in April 1609, expatriates could once again enter the city.[42] For a fee, a painter could work in the town for a few months without becoming a member of the guild.[43] There was apparently an interest in high-quality church interiors during those years. Jan Brueghel I painted figures in an old panel by Hendrik van Steenwijck I for Cardinal Borromeo in Milan at the time (see cat. 30).[44] Klaus Ertz established the probability that Van Steenwijck stayed in Antwerp on the basis of verifiable collaborations between Jan Brueghel and Van Steenwijck from around 1613 to before 1617 (when it is proven that Van Steenwijck was first in London).[45] What is more, the church interiors of Paul Vredeman de Vries, who had been domiciled in Amsterdam since

the beginning of the century, were known in Antwerp around 1610. The fact that Paul Vredeman married Maeyken Godelet in Amsterdam in 1601 may have played a role, since she was a relative – presumably the sister – of Pieter Brueghel II's wife.[46] Paul Vredeman collaborated several times with the younger Pieter Brueghel's brother, Jan Brueghel I, who provided staffage, as well as with Frans Francken in the same capacity.[47] Both figure specialists also cooperated with Neeffs. On the basis of his collaborations with Antwerp staffage artists, Vredeman's temporary presence in Antwerp at a time when the metropolis on the Scheldt was undergoing a process of economic recovery is a reasonable supposition.[48]

It is accordingly quite possible that the two family heirs of the Antwerp architecture painting tradition, Hendrik van Steenwijck II and Paul Vredeman de Vries, were in town for a time after 1609, during the period of the armistice. In any case, the work of Hendrik II and Paul had a stimulating effect on Peeter Neeffs's production. From around 1620 onward, however, Neeffs had virtually no competition in Antwerp. Paul Vredeman died in Amsterdam in 1617, Abel Grimmer died in 1619, and Van Steenwijck was in London from 1617 onward and worked there for a choice circle of customers until the early 1630s. It was around this time that Neeffs seems to have expanded his largely standardised production, presumably under the pressure of growing financial difficulties. Over the course of several years, he changed his refined and time-consuming manner of painting to a faster way of working. Quantity rather than quality: this motto can euphemistically also be referred to as product innovation.[49]

Another Antwerp painter overlooked by Jantzen should also receive mention before this survey comes to a close: Sebastiaen Vrancx (1573–1647). Vrancx was

Fig. 9
Sebastiaen Vrancx, *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral*, c. 1621, oil on canvas, 116 × 158 cm, Private collection

familiar with Paul Vredeman's approach, and not only through the medium of books and prints, which provided him with the orientation for several of his garden and palace paintings. Joost Vander Auwera has submitted detailed observations on a *Church Interior* dated 1613 by Paul Vredeman in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels (inv. 4487) in which Sebastiaen Vrancx painted the figures.[50] In 1989, Ursula Härting published a signed painting of a temple interior by Vrancx featuring figures by Frans Francken II.[51] For this painting, Vrancx looked to an engraving from *Architectura*, published by Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries in The Hague in 1606/7.[52] Yet Vrancx is more important for his work as a church 'portraitist'. In addition to the paintings on view in this exhibition (cats. 36 and 39), his *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral* is worthy of mention in this context, a work long known only from an old photograph and erroneously attributed to Hendrik van Steenwijck II (fig. 9).[53] The painting is a masterpiece by Vrancx not only in the rendering of the figures, but also in its architecture, which is presumably also by his hand. The altar of the weavers' guild at the left has been replaced by that of the surgeons and barbers completed by Ambrosius Francken shortly before 1610. The splendid composition bears a relation to a number of other versions and copies, which have more or less justifiably been regarded as works by Van Steenwijck or Neeffs.[54]

NOTES

1 This article is based on a text about Abel Grimmer and the depictions of St Walburga's Church (the Walburgiskerk) written by the two authors over a period of approximately 10 years. For publication in this catalogue, Thomas Fusenig has added a number of stylistic-historical observations on Peeter Neeffs and Sebastiaen Vrancx. A second part of the original text appears in revised form on pp. 156–67. Jantzen 1910 (1979), pp. 19–33.

2 A synthesis of the state of research on the emigration of artists after 1585 is provided by Van der Linden, 2015, pp. 18–54, esp. pp. 31 and 33 on Vredeman and Van Steenwijck.

3 Legrand 1957, pp. 163–7; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991.

4 Jantzen 1910 (1979), p. 239, nos. 587–587a, erroneously lists two church interiors. Vrancx merely furnished the paintings with figures.

5 Van Roey 1966, pp. 107–32, p. 127; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 15.

6 Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 249, cat. 1; Baisier 2008, pp. 287 et passim. On the drawings of Antwerp Cathedral cited to substantiate this conjecture, see Grieten 1993, pp. 227–85, fig. 6, p. 239. Grieten points out that the signature on the drawings is presumably not authentic.

7 Legrand 1957; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 46, pl. 20; Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 11, p. 190.

8 Howarth 2009, pp. 87–8; see the review of the book in Fusenig 2012.

9 Baisier 2008, p. 287 (with the assumption that Grimmer worked as an architect); Maillet 2012, pp. 105–9 et passim.

10 Lemgo and Antwerp 2012, cats. 164, 165, 168e, 192 (Hans Vredeman), cats. 166, 168e (Paul Vredeman); Maillet 2012, M-1169, M-1171, M-1172. M-1174 (Hans Vredeman); M-1682 (Paul Vredeman).

11 Daniëls 1985, pp. 418–24; Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 150; Fusenig 2016, pp. 10–23, p. 16, fig. 6. See cat. 5 on the context of the Gdańsk church paintings.

12 Howarth 2009. See also Fusenig 2012 on the chronology of the dated works, esp. note 21.

13 Alinari, Florence, no. 40088 as 'P. Neeffs: Interno di Chiesa, Collezione Conte Segrè-Sartorio'; Fusenig 2012, p. 133, fig. 1. The signature and date on the pillar at the left, 'P. Neeffs F(ecit)/ 1663', are much too legible and too late to be genuine. For a signed painting featuring the same composition but more widely framed, see Howarth 2009, II.B.51 (as a Hendrik II); Maillet 2012, p. 377, M-1199.

14 See the figures in the painting by Gillis Mostaert, *Moses Striking Water from the Rock*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. On both Vredeman's and Van Steenwijck's collaboration with Mostaert, see Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cats. 9, 17, 27, 118, 121, 124, 125, 126, 150 (?) (Vredeman) and 45 (Van Steenwijck), and Michiels, 2005, pp. 42–65, esp. pp. 54–5.

15 Maillet 2012, p. 284, M-0640 (as a Neeffs); not in Bertier de Sauvigny 1991.

16 Monogram AG (in ligature) 1593, top left; Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 32; Maillet 2012, p. 252, M-0452.

17 On the series, see Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 30; Hollstein c.1450–1700 (1997), vols. 47–48 (Hans Vredeman de Vries), nos. 30–50. Engraving no. 8 (H. 38) from this series provided the model for the rear section of the building; the front section is a variation on other engravings (H. 42 and 48).

18 See Delvingt 2001–02; Antwerp 2009, cat. 4, pp. 104–9 et passim. A replica of the Antwerp painting whose status has not yet been clarified can be found in the parish church of Sainte-Savine near Troyes (www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral; reference: OA010031000341).

19 On the perspectival construction of the two Vredemans and the two Van Steenwijcks, see Fusenig 2012, p. 135.

20 Photo KIK/IRPA, Brussels, A 92707; not in Bertier de Sauvigny 1991 or Maillet 2012.

21 On the matter of Hans Vredeman's and Hendrick van Steenwijck's Lutheran confession, see Fusenig 2003 (2006), p. 96, note 28.

22 A signed work by Abel Grimmer corresponds with the painting for the most part: Sotheby's, London, 7 April 1981, lot 138; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 247, cat. CI; Maillet 2012, M-0450. A precise quotation is also found in a painting to which the figures were probably added at a later point in time: Lempertz, Cologne, 17 November 2007, lot 1251; Lempertz, Cologne, 1 June 1958, lot 76 (Peeter Neeffs II, supposedly signed). The floor may have been painted over when the figures were added at a later date. There are also correspondences with a church interior by Abel Grimmer that has occasionally been attributed to Van Steenwijck or Neeffs; Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, New York, 2009–10; Howarth 2009, II.B.69 (see II.B.190); Maillet 2012, M-0641 (see M-0642).

23 On the squared drawings after a composition by Hendrik van Steenwijck, see Howarth 2009, II.G.11 and II.G.17; Fusenig 2012, p. 140. Maillet 2012 erroneously attributes a number of painted versions of the composition to the Hessian architecture painter Wolfgang Avemann.

24 Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 50, pp. 227–32; Hollstein c.1450–1700 (1997), vol. 48, 517–92.

25 Fusenig 2012, p. 132, on the older literature cited in Howarth 2009, p. 7 et passim.

26 Works by the Neeffs workshop are found 'in nearly all major galleries, often several in a single gallery', Thieme-Becker *Künstlerlexicon*, vol. 25 (1931), p. 374. Nearly every major Old Masters auction includes a work attributed to him or his sons. The list of works from the Neeffs workshop in Jantzen 1910 (1979) is his most extensive, comprising some 130 entries; Maillet 2012 lists more than three times that amount.

27 Frans Baudoin, 'Neefs', in Grove 1996, vol. 22, p. 718. The remark by Klaus Ertz still holds true: 'Despite the pioneering work by Hans Jantzen … the Neeffs œuvre … can be considered largely unresearched'; Paris 1987–8, p. 60 (with reference to the remark on this desideratum published in 1979).

28 The biographical information is based on Van den Branden 1883, pp. 608–12, and Rombouts and Lerius 1864–76, I, pp. 454, 491.

29 Inv. 1183: Jantzen 1910 (1979), pp. 40–1, no. 242.

30 Fusenig 2005, pp. 143–9, pp. 143–5, fig. 1.

31 In 1987, Klaus Ertz published the *Interior of a Hall Church with Beggar* in the collection of the Galerie d'art St Honoré Paris (with the monogram PN on the pillar at the right). See Paris 1987, cat. 23, with colour illustrations; Maillet 2012, cat. M-0063 (as an Avemann); Sotheby's, London, 10 December 1984, lot 107. Fusenig 2005, fig. 8, still treats it as a reliable Neeffs. However, it has since proven to be an early work by Bartholomeus van Bassen. For a long time, the large drawing of Bonn Cathedral in the Fondation Custodia in Paris was considered an unequivocally signed work bearing the date 1618 (ibid., fig. 5). Claire Baisier convincingly proposes an attribution of the architecture to Gerrit Berckheyde (see cat. 14).

32 Richard Green, London, November/December 1984, cat. 2, as a Hendrik van Steenwijck II; catalogued in the RKD (Netherlands Institute for Art History), The Hague, under Neeffs; Fusenig 2005, fig. 7 (as a Neeffs); Maillet 2012, M-0426; Howarth 2009, II.B.138.

33 Inv. 1605; Díaz Padrón 1975, vol. 1, pp. 776–7, no. 1605; vol. 1, pp. 207–8, vol. 2, ill. 151; Jantzen 1910 (1979), no. 318; Maillet 2012, M-0660.

34 Signed at bottom left: 'P.D.NEFS', dated on a base at left: 1.6.1.8., RCIN 405505; White, 2007, pp. 147–9; Maillet 2012, M-0636.

35 Signed 'P.NEFS.1619'; Sotheby's, London, 3 July 1996, lot 25; De Maere and Wabbes, 1994, vol. III, p. 882 (with fig.); Maillet 2012, M-0657.

36 Pita Andrade and Borobia Guerrero 1992, pp. 416–17 (purchased in 1980 on the London art market), supposedly signed on the panel on the right-hand pillar: 'Peeter Neefs'; Maillet 2012 M-0648.

37 Vey and Kersting 1967, p. 115, fig. 158; Howarth 2009, cat. II.B.79; Maillet 2012, M-1233.

38 Schapelhouman 1979, p. 92.

39 Signed and dated 1636, Sotheby's, London, 4 July 2012, lot 142; Hollstein c.1450–1700 (1997), vol. 48, no. 623.

40 http://balat.kikirpa.be/photo.php?path=B085497&objnr=136238&nr=12 (accessed on 16 March 2016).

41 Raffael Valls, *Recent Acquisitions 1998*, no. 20. Neeffs evidently adopted the clustered piers and the gallery from the repertoire of Paul Vredeman; see Fusenig 2003, fig. 2 (Schloss Rohrau). The staffage in Paul Vredeman's Rohrau painting was carried out by Jan Brueghel I.

42 Van der Linden 2015, pp. 38–9. A number of painters from the northern provinces settled in Antwerp during these years and joined the Guild of St Luke, for example Dirick Aertsen (as early as 1607), Adriaen van Stalbemt (1609), Willem van Nieulandt (1613), Jan Porcellis (1617) and Pieter Soutman; Rombouts and Lerius 1864–76, I, pp. 442, 454, 507, 538.

43 In invoices for the years 1617–18 there is mention of the receipt of six guilders: 'Ontfangen van Michiel Lasne, plaetsnider, fransman, voir de vriheit omme alhier te mogen wercken den tyt van twey maenden', Rombouts and Lerius 1864–76, I, p. 541. The *Liggeren* of 1616 to 1629 are unfortunately missing. What is more, not all invoices of the Guild of St Luke were included in the edition.

44 In an oft-cited letter of 14 March 1609 to Bianchi, the agent of his Italian patron Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Jan Brueghel I refers to a 'quadro de perspettivo' he plans to send to the cardinal; Bedoni 1983, p. 120, fig. 5. The painting is still in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana in Milan. On 4 July 1609, Brueghel once again wrote to Bianchi. He had not had the opportunity to work as planned. After the armistice ('questa tempa de trevis'), friends had come to Antwerp to visit by the thousands: 'gli amici che vengono con milliare a visitare nostra cita d'Anversa' (p. 121).

45 Ertz 1979, pp. 508–12. On the staffage figures by Frans Francken II in Van Steenwijck's paintings, see Härting 1989, pp. 163–5.

46 Briels 1997, pp. 404–5.

47 Fusenig 2003; Thomas Fusenig and Bernard Vermet, 'Der Einfluss von Hans Vredeman de Vries auf die Malerei', in Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, pp. 161–78, p. 163, fig. 4 (Graf Harrachsche Familiensammlung, Schloss Rohrau), p. 167, fig. 11 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg).

48 Fusenig 2003. On staffage figures by Frans Francken II in Paul Vredeman's paintings, see Härting 1989, pp. 165–6, and Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cats. 214–15.

49 On the commercialisation of art production in Antwerp in the course of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, see Van der Linden 2015 (with further literature).

50 Brussels 2004, chap. VI, figs. 1–5 (n.p.).

51 Härting 1989, fig. 145, p. 165.

52 Fuhring 2005, XLVIII, part 2, 609–10 (IONICA SUPER DORICA).

53 Christie's, London, 21 November 1952, lot 103; formerly Galerie De Jonckheere; Maillet 2012, M-1193 (col. ill.); Howarth 2009, II.B.127.

54 Oil on canvas, 71 × 100.5 cm, signed, English private collection; exh. cat. Trafalgar Galleries at the Royal Academy IV, by Ronald, Alfred and Edward Cohen, London, 1985, fig. 4, p. 15; Brian Koetser Gallery, Spring 1969; Howarth 2009, I.15; Maillet 2012, M-1194. This painting bears the date 1587. On the first altar at the right, however, the altarpiece of the guild of the 'Jonge Handboog' can be seen, and it is known that Wenceslas Coeberger did not send this altarpiece, which depicts the martyrdom of St Sebastian, from Rome to Antwerp until 1599 (Musée des Beaux-Art, Nancy, inv. 92). A version attributed to Neeffs: oil on canvas, 81.9 × 106.7 cm, signed 'P. NEEFS'; Christie's, London, 19 May 1989, lot 187; Maillet 2012, M-0655. A signed copy from the workshop of Peeter Neeffs, supposedly dated 1610, is in the collection of the Hermitage in St Petersburg; Maillet 2012, M-0656. Ornaments decorating the architecture diminish the spatial effect. The windows do not let any light in.

Catholic life in the churches of Antwerp [1]

Ursula Härting

Prologue: three church interiors

Van Steenwijck and Brueghel: Interior view of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp (cat. 30)

This is one of the oldest known interior depictions of Antwerp's cathedral.[2] Somewhat unusual is the fact that the figures were added to the architecture after the death of the painter. Hendrik van Steenwijck I, painted the interior, signing and dating the work 1593. Jan Brueghel I bought the painting more than ten years later, probably around 1609, and incorporated the scenic staffage. Collaboration between painters of architecture and of small figures was quite commonplace in Antwerp; figure painters would enliven the completed but empty interiors with figures, furnishings and retables. However, the second activity usually followed quickly on the heels of the first. For a painter to furnish a work with figures on his own initiative, long after its original completion and after the death of his colleague, must point to its special status. Jan Brueghel's staffage derives from his artistic repertoire; however, it is significant that it includes a group composed of Catharina van Mariënburg, his wife, and his children, Jan and Paschasia, which ties it in with another painting that must also have been created around 1609.[3]

In the foreground, dogs are playing in front of a group of women wearing *huycks* (floor-length veils and caps) and accompanied by their young children (see pp. 33–4). Behind them, worshippers are kneeling before a celebrant at the now lost mercers' (merchants') guild altar. The retable resting on this altar is crowned with a large tondo showing St Nicholas. The altar stands on a *bradella*,[4] a low platform surrounded by a balustrade and accessed by a wooden gate (see p. 32). It is impossible to tell whether the notice on the left pillar is displaying rules of behaviour (a *lex ecclesiae*), a placard from the archbishop in connection with the offertory-box below it (see further, note 54), or obituary notices.[5]

Frans Francken's staffage: Church interior (cat. 15)[6]

Via the sole arched opening in the choir screen, the eye is led through the nave to the chancel of a Gothic church. Below the swallow's nest organ in the foreground to the right, light is cast between two compound pillars and falls upon a priest who is hearing a shrift, an auricular confession (see cat. 8/Grimmer; see further, p. 32).

All the adults and children are wearing the latest fashions. The men and boys have removed their headwear (see further, p. 34). The striking headdresses of two ladies, a little hat with a pom-pom (to be put on and taken off using the small vertical peg under the pom-pom) worn above a long *huyck*, were an innovation dating to around 1630 and are also known from a portrait drawing of Hélène Fourment, by her husband, Peter Paul Rubens. It is not possible to determine from this and comparable illustrations whether it was mandatory or modish to be seen in public with headwear, particularly headwear such as this. Letters are known written by young women to their grandmothers

begging for money so they could go to church wearing just such a hat.[7]

In front of the chapel to the left, a couple with a child are attending Mass. It would appear that they have ordered it, because the three of them are there alone. They are kneeling and holding a prayer book in their hands. The acolyte behaves similarly at the altar, which bears a candle and a cross. In front of the chapel to the right, a married couple are kneeling in prayer; in addition to a prayer book, the wife also holds an artistically oversized rosary in her hand, a striking symbol of veneration of the Virgin Mary and thus an expression of the Catholic faith.[8] In front of the chapel's gateway and to the left, a boy points out to his father the virtually naked beggar at the entrance to the church. To the extreme right of the picture, a cripple staggers on crutches alongside a young female beggar with two children. Further on I shall return to some of these themes, including candles, the cross, behaviour, fashionable dress, the poor and cripples.

The scenography brings the space harmoniously to life. All of the figures come from the repertoire of Frans Francken II, and none of them functions as an individual portrait. All confidently claim their own space and the perspective used to show them is more accurate than that used in many of the figures of Francken's contemporaries or of his son Frans Francken III (1607–67). The fluid way in which the paint has been applied is in line with the technique employed by Frans Francken II around 1639.[9]

Peeter Neeffs: Interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp (cat. 33)

From the west, our gaze is led through the nave ending in a rood loft with three arches and two aisles on either side. The springing line of the striking octagonal crossing tower makes it clear that this is Antwerp's cathedral. A Mass is being said in the Chapel of Our Lady seen to the left. Above the altar at the first column on the right, one of the many guild altars in the nave, stands Wenceslas Coeberger's retable showing the martyrdom of St Sebastian.[10] It is probable that the statues of the apostles on the columns along the nave are no earlier in date than 1616. A statue of the Virgin Mary on the crescent moon has been added to these statues, standing against the front right column and opposite St

Fig. 1
Robert de Baudous, *Catholic Service* (*Vera imago ecclesiae papisticae*), engraving in *Recueil. Collection Michel Hennin. Estampes relatives à l'Histoire de France*, vol. 8, nos. 708–809, 1577–87, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, inv. Réserve QB-201

Peter with raised keys.[11] A connection was being made between the apostles as pillars of faith and the *Symbolum Apostolicum*, better known as the 'Apostles' Creed' or the 'Twelve Articles of Faith'. This explains why their statues were attached to columns, often with one of the 12 articles below their feet.[12] To the extreme right we can see the table from which almoners, the city's wealthy masters, distributed bread to poor burghers who were true believers.[13] Two Capuchin monks kneel in the middle of the nave. Four large candlesticks with candles have been placed around a catafalque covered with a white cloth, perhaps for a woman or a child. The catafalque stands close to the weavers' guild retable painted by Maerten de Vos. The requiem mass was usually celebrated by the guild's curate, but there is not a single grieving guildsman to be seen, although they usually led a fellow member's funeral procession (see the foreground of fig. 1). The closer the burial place was to the chancel, the greater the sum that had to be paid to the church wardens. Marie Juliette Marinus notes that it was not uncommon in the second half of the seventeenth century for bodies to be interred in the evening and for the catafalque to be erected on the following day as a purely symbolic gesture.[14]

As is fitting, the gentlemen in the picture have removed their hats (see further, p. 34). The ladies' headwear is still adorned with a pom-pom on a peg, but the *huyck* veil is apparently no longer in fashion. We should never forget that the staffage might have been added later and not necessarily by the artist. However, from comparisons with fashionably dressed people seen in

dated paintings by David Teniers (1610–90), it would seem that the staffage in this case was incorporated in the 1640s, at the same time as the architecture. Sadly, the majority of staffage painters remained anonymous. Indeed, they were not mentioned in the workshops of masters such as Jan Brueghel I and II, Frans Francken II, Adriaen van Stalbemt and Sebastiaen Vrancx. This explains why even today we can get no further than '*een kercxken van Peeter Neeffs, gestoffeert met figuerkens*' ('a church by Peeter Neeffs staffed with figures').[15]

This view illustrates the trademark style of Peeter Neeffs I and II. Father and son painted numerous such interiors of the cathedral, each closely resembling the other. Their reputation depended on it. Perhaps Jan Brueghel was thinking of just such a church interior when he wrote that he had purchased 'una cheisa [sic] al u sante de questa paieso ben falle [sic]' ('a church typical of this region, well executed').[16]

There was a market for the Neeffs churches throughout Europe. The market preferred by Antwerp art dealer Matthijs Musson in the mid–seventeenth century was Paris, as demand was great there and consequently prices were high. Engravings that copied these works were still being made in the French capital a good hundred years later (fig. 2, Noach van der Meer II).[17] In any event, artistic quality and aesthetic considerations also played a role with regard to these small cabinet paintings. Buyers, art connoisseurs and collectors all wanted to delight in the visual experience; they wanted to enjoy art.[18]

Fig. 2
Noach van der Meer II, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, 1751–1822, etching and engraving, plate border 24.7 × 30.3 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-23.443

How a church is furnished, what takes place within and seemly behaviour when present

The first artists to depict church interiors – whether existing or imagined, with or without staffage – lived in the Southern Netherlands. In Catholic Antwerp after 1575, and even more so in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, they employed small figures to bring a good deal of life to an inordinate number of such interiors. This has received little attention until now, and this exhibition is the first to examine in detail what was taking place in those churches.[19] Until recently, research has focused on the genesis, chronology and appraisal of the genre, identification of the churches and their decor, and questions of connoisseurship. Just as attempts have been made to discern which works are depicted in paintings that show picture galleries (*kunstkamers*), so people have sought to investigate the reality of church depictions. Produced after the plunder of churches under Calvinism, these paintings of church interiors have served as a resource to ascertain how empty churches were regenerated to include 'brand new baroque altars'.[20] In this exhibition catalogue, something else is being done for the first time: we interpret multiple details in the staffage and examine how the scenography of the interior was influenced by the important Catholic directives from the Council of Trent (1545–63) and those that followed.

In the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands

Art history literature seldom makes reference to paintings of church interiors and their subject matter. At best, there is a casual aside that the staffage of figures in sacred places by artists from the Northern Netherlands, such as in the reformed churches by Pieter Saenredam (1597–1665), not only 'serve as indicators of perspective, but also have an iconographic significance', or that the figures in Saenredam's churches 'act as the ideal worshippers and exemplify spiritual behaviour' and the churches of 'the Berckheyde brothers were valued not only as collector's items, but also as works that gave pause for reflection and examined questions of faith'.[21] Only rarely have people thought that staffage figures had 'no iconographic meaning' and had the sole purpose of bringing to life 'a series of monotonous interiors'.[22] Claire Baisier wrote in general terms that the

'interior views of churches both in the Protestant North as well as in the Catholic South [were] doubtless popular as a testament to their owners' faith, because of [the paintings'] religious connotation'.[23] Thomas Fusenig was quick to point to the religious eloquence of staffage and to clues contained within a painting.[24]

Church interiors from the Protestant North seem to me to react in opposition to those from the Catholic Southern Netherlands. In Protestant versions, the staffage is placed close to the observer. These paintings are often evidence of a self-confident, even political, stance. The Protestant faith bursts forth, especially when the figures are standing next to the tomb of William I, Prince of Orange, or next to the bull on a column in the now lost St Mary's Church (Mariakerk) in Utrecht.[25] In the southern provinces in the first decades of the seventeenth century, such 'heretics' would incur a severe punishment if, when at fairs or during processions, they did not flee into a garden or doorway or else pay homage by kneeling or removing their hats.[26]

We are seizing on the opportunity afforded by this exhibition to supplement the hitherto sporadic and peripheral commentary on Flemish church interiors with staffage, underpinning this commentary with source material about the Catholic situation in Antwerp. Works by Hendrik van Steenwijck I, Hans Vredeman de Vries and Abel Grimmer usher in the painting of church interiors in the Southern Netherlands (further to this, see essay I pp. 12–21).[27]

Under Habsburg rule

The Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 and the so-called Quiet Iconoclastic Fury of 1581 in Antwerp signified a true religious and political revolution for the Southern Netherlands. Following Luther's Reformation, it took a relatively long time for a response to come from the Catholic side – this being through the Council of Trent (1545–63). In the following years 'heretics' were persecuted and the conflict with the northern provinces ended with the proclamation of the Republic in 1579 under the Union of Utrecht. After 1585, following territorial and religious battles, wars and sieges, the Spanish Habsburgs reigned from Brussels once again over the Southern Netherlands, which were to be 're-Catholicised'. From 1596 to 1633, rule was exercised by the ultra-Catholic archducal couple Albert and Isabella.[28] An arms truce with the North lasted from 1609 to 1621. Once more, until well into the seventeenth century, indulgences were granted,[29] altars erected and churches built.

Pieter Bruegel's allegory of faith: the depiction of religious worship

In 1559, Antwerp's Church of Our Lady was elevated to cathedral status. A series of prints published in Antwerp may date from drawings made in the same year by Pieter Bruegel I (1526/30–69) concerning the seven virtues. One of these is an allegory of faith (cat. 1).[30] 'Fides', the personification of Christian faith, stands in a fictitious church interior. A metre-tall cross rises up above her. At her feet lie the instruments of Christ's torture. To the left, sacramental rites are being performed: a baptism, a confession, a communion and (in front of a Lady altar) a marriage. To the right, a preacher stands in a pulpit above a dense crowd of people. On the same side, right at the back, we can just make out the elevation after consecration. This print provided the model for representations of informative religious activities in an ecclesiastical building. It is probable that the staffage painters took inspiration from it, as depictions of sacramental activities can be seen in even the very first paintings to show existing or imagined church interiors.[31]

Bruegel's mastery in depicting activities taking place simultaneously was also applied to two prints made around 1600 (figs. 1 and 3) by Robert de Baudous (1574–1659). Here, the engraver presents the Catholic service as a *vera imago ecclesiae papisticae* (true image of the papist church) and the Reformed service as a *vera imago veteris ecclesiae apostolicae* (true image of the old, apostolic church).[32] Both of these rare works are displayed together, providing a good idea of each of the two forms of worship in their own setting. The Catholic church is over-ornate in its furnishings and overcrowded with worshippers. We can tell that this is a satirical print from the worshippers to the front and left who are praying to 'idolatrous images', from the procession and from the people who are kneeling down in the centre foreground. At the Diet of Worms (1521) Luther had formulated the things he rejected, and that is precisely what can be seen here: indulgences, purgatory, idolatry of the Virgin Mary, retables, altar frontals, candles, holy water, lamps and candlesticks.[33] The second print shows the very

Fig. 3
Robert de Baudous, *Protestant Service* (*Vera imago veteris ecclesiae apostolicae*), *Church Interior with Sermon, Baptism and Holy Communion*, c. 1600–25, engraving, plate border 36.7 × 46.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-1893-A-18169

Fig. 4
Peter Paul Rubens, *A Sermon in a Village Church*, c. 1630, black chalk, oil- and water-based paints, 42.2 × 57.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 2000, inv. 2000.483

little that a Protestant community believed it needed: a church interior, similar architecturally to the Catholic version but austere and free of all manner of paintings, intended for baptisms, Holy Communion and preaching. This pair of prints pithily expresses the basis on which religious practices were depicted in a didactic and visually contrasting manner within clearly different church interiors.

The reality in churches and parishes

First of all we need to recognise the religious and historical reality of the time – the situation and catechesis in the parishes of the Southern Netherlands after the Council of Trent.[34] In general, partly thanks to the many paintings of church interiors, people to this day have a relatively rose-tinted picture of the structural condition of Catholic churches after 1600. It is assumed that the situation with regard to churches, parishes and religious belief soon improved after 1585 as a result of compulsory re-Catholicisation. The Catholic Spanish Habsburgs banished members of the Dutch Reformed Church from the country and Torrentius, Bishop of Antwerp from 1587 to 1595, gave them no more than four years to go into exile or else return to the true faith.[35] Owing to this, the region appeared to be free of heretics, and researchers began to speak of rapid Catholicisation and a strengthening of faith. However, the much-used expression 'Catholic bulwark' relates only to a part of the well-educated middle and upper classes.[36]

For many years, worship – communal prayer – continued to be performed in dilapidated churches. In a drawing attributed to Peter Paul Rubens (fig. 4), a preacher is standing in a pulpit in an interior more reminiscent of a barn than a church. Following the religious unrest, most churches were in a terrible state, and complaints continued to be made about this for a long time in official documents.[37] It was not possible to finance the construction of new churches, and existing ones were being restored only by slow degrees, so it was necessary for both denominations to carry on using Gothic churches over a long period.

A power vacuum arose in the eastern parts of the country, near to northern France, thanks to the withdrawal of the Spanish troops from the Southern Netherlands. The Protestants from the North subsequently penetrated these regions, laid waste other parts of the country and looted villages, towns and Catholic buildings.[38] In 1623, 13 villages in the deanery of Bruges still remained in the hands of adherents to the Northern Dutch Reformed Church. Some 10 churches were being used for both Catholic and Protestant services in the deaneries of Bergen-op-Zoom and Breda, and Catholics were paying rent for use of churches. There was not only a shortage of churches and accommodation for worship, but also a shortage of priests and catechists.

Consequently, the poor no longer received any religious instruction until well into the seventeenth century, and everywhere a basic knowledge of rites and practices was lost, even among the clergy. As a result, we find writers speaking of 'a lost generation', 'heresies', and 'a great many heathens' who 'infected with heresy ... take no account of the faith, but trust in fate ...'.[39]

Following his first visit to the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp in 1593, canon Michael Breugel wrote that his colleagues in the choir idled away their time 'in gossiping, drowsing off, staring about or reading another book', while the choristers rushed through the Mass at such speed as to make joining in impossible. During the High Mass, so many canons were reading private masses for payment that the choir was almost empty. Everyone came and went as they pleased. For that reason the choir became known in popular parlance as 'the dovecote'.[40] Making the sign of the cross degenerated into a rapid circular motion. Untutored curates stuttered their words, could scarcely read or spoke so loud that they disturbed other worshippers. Members of a civic guard exchanged two images of saints from their altar for flower vases. In 1618, there were still guild altars without crucifixes.[41] Such disrespectful conduct was utterly inconsistent with the known views and requirements of the Church Father Augustine of Hippo and with the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (1582) by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, Archbishop of Bologna.[42] Pastors were supposed to exercise their office with dignity and lead an exemplary Christian life; that also applied to Roman Catholic artists.[43] In 1606, the Bishop of Antwerp requested a permit to visit the deanery of Herentals, near Antwerp, where nobody had been confirmed for as many as 30 years. Together with his assistants, he performed confirmations there for 10,000 townsfolk and villagers.

Jesuit publications inform us about the administering of communion in Antwerp. In 1600, this occurred 240,000 times, which works out at a frequency of four to five times a year per inhabitant (probably divided between high days such as Christmas, Easter and Whitsun).[44] This is why in that same year Bishop Willem van Bergen (1597–1601) asked in Rome whether an indulgence could be granted to whoever took communion in the parish church, instead of taking communion from a layperson (*séculier*) at Easter. A quarter of a century later this resulted in the banning of such people from continuing to administer Holy Communion in parish churches. Neither was it felt fitting any more that they should give communion to the sick. By 1614 Antwerp had a population of 60,000, but the number of Easter Communions was estimated to be no more than 24,450.[45]

Free Sunday schools were reintroduced in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.[46] A schoolmaster from the city would teach the children reading, writing and arithmetic, but of greater importance was the religious instruction that a Jesuit came to give.[47] It may be that inadequate instruction, resulting from the shortage of priests, explains why the archducal subjects became increasingly secularised. In 1615, instruction was given to 3,500 illiterate children aged between seven and fifteen. Thanks to the efforts of the Brotherhood of Christian Teaching (Broederschap van de Christelijke Lering), their number had risen to 7,000 by 1619.[48] The Latin version of the catechism had long been used for preaching and instruction, but Antwerp's Bishop Malderus produced a Flemish catechism in 1623, and a French version was published in 1628 on the initiative of Archbishop Boonen.[49] This allowed broad sections of the population to acquire a requisite level of comprehension. The catechism of 1623 was produced under Malderus's supervision by the Jesuit Willem de Pretere and was a revised version of the work produced in 1609 by fellow Jesuit Lodewijk Makeblijde, which came to be known as 'the Mechelen Catechism'.[50] Translators were engaged to make not only the Latin intelligible but also the liturgy.[51] From 1590 to the 1630s, guidelines were discussed in connection with the observance of Sundays and Holy Days and the obligation to attend Mass on such days.

There were continual complaints about misconduct. For young people, Sunday Mass was a time for dancing in the town square or going off to fish. As elsewhere in Europe, the menfolk would spend their time at an inn, resulting in habitual brawling. In a decree of 1607, the archdukes forbade their servants, bricklayers, reapers, carpenters, coachmen, boatswains, millers, butchers, bakers and shopkeepers from performing any type of labour on Sundays and Holy Days. In the same year, it was decreed in Antwerp that all inns had to remain closed during the Mass. The innkeepers bypassed the injunction by selling beer and brandy at reduced prices in the hour before Mass commenced, resulting in drunken acolytes.[52]

The fact that only 30 per cent of parish churches had returned to service by 1600 is also given as a reason

for such poor rates of attendance at Masses. This went hand-in-hand with a lack of priests to impart basic religious knowledge. Even the wealthy Diocese of Antwerp was short of 150 priests. In about 1600 in the area around Bruges, Damme and Sluis, 1,000 altars were consecrated, but the majority of the illiterate rural population remained short-changed because of the lack of available churches and priests.

During the Synod of Antwerp in 1610, debate was still ongoing about where the money was to be found for the cathedral's restoration. It was the most important problem for both Bishop Johannes Miraeus (1604–11) and his successor, Johannes Malderus (1611–33). In their appeal for financial assistance they said that 'help with the construction as an active form of penance... [is a] metaphor for the fact that material assistance would wash away sins'.[53] However, they also said they had no wish to undertake anything without the archdukes in Brussels. In 1611, following laborious discussions with the chapter, the archdukes issued a proclamation concerning the reconstruction of churches. Money began to be raised in Antwerp straight away. This process began elsewhere in Flanders two years later, because it was only in 1613 that the decree was promulgated there. Collections were taken for the reconstruction of churches several times during sermons or Masses; the fabric committee in particular was asked to lend more financial support to the restoration of the cathedral. In 1613–14, public donations made it possible to provide vaulting for the nave of the cathedral. Some donors also purchased the right to have an epitaph placed on a column. The proclamation also determined that, in addition to collections at the church entrance, an area should be provided inside the church itself where worshippers could leave coins.[54] When seen against this backdrop, it is clear that the paintings of church interiors present an idealised picture of the actual situation.

The representation of Antwerp's cathedral

In Catholic Antwerp, artistic capital of the Southern Netherlands provinces, the imposing cathedral was the beating heart of the city. It was the largest Gothic church in the Netherlands, capable of accommodating 25,000 worshippers. The church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the city's patron, and at the front stood the devotional image of Our Lady of Antwerp. The Iconoclastic Fury erupted in 1566, seven years after the elevation of the Church of Our Lady to cathedral status. Although the cathedral was left standing during the period of instability that ensued and the period of the Calvinist Republic (1577–85), it was robbed of its treasures and stripped of its ceremonial items, furniture, paintings and statuary. An idea of the success of interior renovations achieved by the guilds and fabric committee can be reasonably gauged by the increasing number of altars in the cathedral, which catered for a growing demand for the memorial masses that required them. The more altars there were, the greater the revenue for the church and its curates.[55]

Peeter Neeffs I (c.1578–c.1660) and his sons Lodewijck Neeffs (1617–49?) and Peeter Neeffs II (1620–after 1675) have left us hundreds of paintings of the cathedral's interior, in particular examples from the 1630s.[56] They enjoyed a virtual monopoly. In 1661, Cornelis De Bie praised Peeter Neeffs's 'Architecture' with its 'Ancient Temples, Churches […] well executed Architecture […] condensed Vaulting, Balusters and Grotesques […] Pillars and Cornices, […] oval Pictures on Parchment.'[57] The scenes that the family business produced, all bearing great similarity to each other, largely consisted of interchangeable pieces of the architectural scenery of church interiors. They were manageable in terms of size, usually provided a panoramic vista and contained few figures.[58] These smaller works – both architecturally and in terms of staffage routine productions – were intended for the market and were not commissions, nor did they represent real churches.[59]

Perspectives: the result of collaboration between specialists; the hallmark of the Antwerp school

After 1560, publications by the ingenious artist, designer and architect Hans Vredeman de Vries (1525/6–c.1609) enabled artists such as Hendrik van Steenwijck I (c.1550–1603) to produce secular and ecclesiastical interiors which were at once convincing and highly complex, and these were referred to as 'perspectives'. Hans and his son Paul published instructions for achieving the correct linear perspective when depicting interiors. However, it was not until publication of Part II of *Perspective* in 1605, that this method became more popular and easier to use, thanks to Paul's increased assistance in providing commentary, explanation and clarification.[60]

All of these pointers resulted in the creation of the first realistic portrayals of identifiable buildings. The first such work by Hendrik van Steenwijck I was of the Palatine Chapel in Aachen Cathedral: a Lady chapel with genre figures.[61] Afterwards, views followed showing a baptism or a christening procession,[62] a Mass and worshippers in invented interiors. Many of such views, including the one with the seven sacraments dating from 1590,[63] were inspired by Antwerp's seven-aisle cathedral. Abel Grimmer (c. 1565–c. 1620) followed the example of Steenwijck's view of 1593 in a work produced in 1595, while his own staffage including preaching, Mass and baptism anticipated Jan Brueghel's skill with portrait-like staffage.[64] In the 1630s, the Neeffs workshop produced many such 'sacramental paintings' that showed a highly realistic perspective of the interior of the cathedral.[65]

To achieve harmonious staffage that included people on a small scale, the architectural painters relied on specialist painters who often remained anonymous. These painters peopled the architectural voids with small figures and sometimes also added altarpieces – which thus created paintings within a painting.[66] If the pattern on the ground does not run on underneath the figures (and it often does), this points to a good partnership between both types of painter.[67] An interior by Hendrik van Steenwijck I in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels has now been dated to around 1600. It would appear that Frans Francken II added staffage to the picture only after 1620 – very late, in other words, just as in the case of the Jan Brueghel I's staffage in the interior now in Budapest (cat. 30).[68] Fashions in clothing are not always helpful in dating the architecture, and it requires expertise to analyse the hands of the painters involved.

It is unclear how Bartholomeus van Bassen and Frans Francken II worked in partnership. Bassen's fictitious, classical-style church interior, with a thoroughly Roman Catholic Blessed Sacrament procession and a self-assured young elite by Francken, was dated by Bassen, resident in The Hague, as 1624, after which Francken, resident in Antwerp, signed it 'ffranck figuravit' in respect of his small figure staffage.[69]

Collaboration between specialists, in our case specialising in architecture and small figures, had been characteristic of the Antwerp school since the late sixteenth century. Staffage painters of church interiors by the Neeffs family – dating from all periods – were chiefly members of the Francken family, but in addition we know of staffage by Jan Brueghel I, Gonzales Coques, Jan van den Hoecke, Bonaventura Peeters, David Ryckaert, Adriaen van Stalbemt, David Teniers, Simon de Vos and Sebastiaen Vrancx, and, above all, by their workshops.

They portrayed reality as more beautiful than was actually the case. Their scenes take an educational, even catechetic, line of approach, emphasising true liturgy and respectable behaviour, which was most important. They did not present the choir as a dovecote of comings and goings, but clad the priests in pristine white vestments (despite the frequent complaint that they were tattered and soiled) and placed candles and crucifixes on the altar (and not vases, for their inappropriateness was considered manifold in that setting until 1618).[70]

The semi-naked, scruffy beggars and cripples did not serve to represent reality either but were there to reinforce the painting's intent: they symbolised a call to patrician duty and Christian charity – clothing the naked was one of the seven corporal works of mercy. It is probable that only poor burghers of the true faith (those with lodgings but impecunious, and those for whom the city took responsibility) were allowed to beg in the church, provided they behaved themselves while there; vagrants and vagabonds were not admitted.[71] Protestants did not think it proper to give alms and food, especially in a church.[72] In their eyes it was a waste of money that solved nothing and served only to assuage the giver's conscience; material donations were felt to be a matter for poor relief. The purpose of donations was not to wash away an individual's sin, because they could not do that. The matter was seen in a different light by Catholics: for the Jesuits Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) and Cornelius a Lapide (1567–1637), giving alms was an act whereby one could do penance for the sin of avarice and thus contribute towards one's own salvation.[73]

Paxes

It would seem from details in a drawing and a painting by Sebastiaen Vrancx (cats. 38 and 39; fig. 5, detail of print by Noach van der Meer II)[74] that the Jesuits' instructions were not always followed. In both works, two lay people and a clergyman are sitting at a table on which there is a collection plate. A lady in a *huyck* (veil and cap) is leaning over the table and something is being

Fig. 5 (detail of fig. 2)
Noach van der Meer II, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, 1751–1822, etching and engraving, plate border 24.7 × 30.3 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-23.443

proffered to her by a gentleman – probably a *pax*, a liturgical tablet to be kissed in the spirit of peace, decorated with scenes from the Old or the New Testament or saints like the Virgin Mary.[75] For Charles Borromeo this was a prohibited item, although his concern had been about the use of paxes during the Mass, before Holy Communion, and not about their very profane use in a public space, as in this case. Between 1588 and 1697, guilds and brotherhoods commissioned silversmiths to make four paxes for Antwerp's cathedral, although how the paxes were used is unknown.[76]

The didactic function of paintings

After the Council of Trent, illustrations were considered indispensable.[77] Charles Borromeo asked the bishops not only to control their quality through the agency of a committee of theologians, but also to impart to artists the required purposes of these images. Artists whose works contained content out of keeping with doctrine might then have punishments imposed on them by the bishops, which ranged from destroying the work at their own expense to hefty fines, imprisonment and excommunication.[78] In all likelihood, this scarcely ever occurred in Antwerp. In his instructions intended for the dioceses on the veneration of 'holy images', *De picturis et imaginibus sacris* (1570), the Leuven theologian Johannes Molanus announced – as Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti had already done previously in Rome – that a list was to be compiled citing the punishment for such transgressions, but it was never published.[79]

In addition to illustrations of all kinds, particularly the sanctjes and suffragia (devotional prints of saints accompanied by edifying texts in Dutch)[80] distributed en masse in the Jesuits' Virgin Mary Sodalities between 1597 and 1616, the Flemish Jesuit Franciscus Costerus (1532–1619) published various sets with his *Catholijcke Sermoonen*. They served as an important means of concretely setting the faithful on the right path in terms of good works, sacramental perceptions and the veneration of saints. It was the bishop's responsibility to control the educational function of illustrations. He had to treat the supervision of artistic production in his diocese with the utmost seriousness, as it was not permitted for the faithful to become bewildered by the presentation of erroneous dogmas.[81]

Given the paltry nature of religious instruction and the conspicuous conduct of the laity and the clergy, paintings showing sacramental and liturgical activities and behaviour in church had a certain instructional or catechetic character from the outset. Against that background, we can understand church interiors depicting wealthy citizens showing charity towards cripples and the poor (fig. 8): to give money to the poor was to make an offering to God. However, contrasting the well-to-do with the semi-clad poor – not only in paintings, but also in reality – concealed a second layer of meaning that is harder for us to understand; specifically that spiritual poverty, an un-Christian life, leads to material misery, while keeping to the right Christian path is rewarded with prosperity and blessings.[82] The class-conscious citizen who looked at such a painting, or who owned it, saw in a self-reflective way in this work that he, too, was a part of this elite (see cat. 15).

'Souvenir of Antwerp':[83] the influential Neeffs variations on the Gothic interior of Antwerp's cathedral

Hendrik van Steenwijck I and his son certainly painted nocturnal church interiors, but it was Peeter Neeffs I who invented companion pieces consisting of round, octagonal or oval night scenes and similar day scenes (figs. 6 and 7). The effects that he employed for churches by night (*nachtkerckken*) included varying the degree of darkness, frequently depicting Vespers and using clear distinctions in illumination to set the scene (cat. 19).[84] Small-scale renditions of church interiors were

Fig. 6
Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of a Church by Day*, oil on copper, 6.5 × 9 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 1596

Fig. 7
Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of a Church by Night*, oil on copper, 6.5 × 9 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 1597

intended to be viewed at close quarters and require a different kind of appraisal. For that reason they are often shown hung at eye level in paintings of *kunstkamers* (picture galleries).[85] These miniaturist portrayals included the production of companion pieces of daytime and midnight Masses.

The return of more visitors to Antwerp was recorded during the Twelve Years' Truce. They 'come in their thousands to visit our city of Antwerp', wrote Jan Brueghel I to friends from the Republic.[86] In descriptions of the perspective drawings and paintings held in the Montias Database,[87] when reference is made to a *kerkje* (small church), *tempeltge* (small temple), or *schildertje* (small painting), it may relate to small interior paintings of this type which visitors took back with them to the North as souvenirs of Antwerp. In Robert Bellarmine's view, Christian churches were a continuation of Solomon's Temple, which they exceeded. In the minds of many, this certainly applied to Antwerp's cathedral.[88] Moreover, thanks to the assorted effects and potent impact created by Peeter Neeffs I and II in their variations on the cathedral's Gothic interior, it stood as a symbol for the city. Father and son idealised and expanded this interior with the assistance of staffage painters, and each of the ceremonies they illustrated underpinned Roman Catholic conviction.

The design of church interiors after the Council of Trent

The Leuven theologian Johannes Molanus (1533–85) was one of the first to respond to the decrees issued by the Council of Trent concerning church interiors and the role played by paintings and statuary.[89] The intention of his guidelines was to help to prevent Protestants from yet again levelling the accusation of idolatry at the Catholic clergy whenever they commissioned works of art.[90] However, his guidelines and the council's decrees offered little to hold onto in concrete terms and provided even fewer examples that might give guidance to the clergy in the renovation of their churches. Shortly after Antwerp's capture by Alexander Farnese in 1585, the Jesuits returned (at first provisionally) to their headquarters in the city at the Huis van Aken. Following this, they opened the Hof van Liere College in Prinsstraat in 1608 and their Convict in 1626. The Jesuits were the storm troops of the Counter-Reformation; they energetically implemented the Council of Trent's ideas and were important writers in the period that followed. They gave lessons in the city and rural areas, provided religious instruction and taught Latin and Greek in particular to young members of the middle and upper classes.[91] Between the foundation of the episcopal see in 1559 and 1633, Antwerp's four successive bishops were all in close contact with the Jesuits and their educational establishment. The first stone of the Jesuit Church was laid in 1615. It was dedicated to the society's founder, Ignatius of Loyola, but after closure of the church in the late eighteenth century and its reopening in 1803 as a parish church, it was rededicated to Charles Borromeo, the cardinal and Archbishop of Milan whose *Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae* (1577) had long been well known in Antwerp. That book examines in detail how

a church interior should look, but the work contains no illustrations.[92]

Fourteen years after Borromeo's publication, a book inspired by it came out in Munich: the bilingual *Ornatus ecclesiasticus/Kirchengeschmuck* by Jacob Müller. The German section of the book contains 70 pictures that clarify how a church should be furnished and how sacred objects should appear. The Tridentine decrees had said little of practical value about the council fathers' vision in that regard. Borromeo and Müller quoted the decrees and offered practical assistance and instructions for the design of consecrated buildings.

Auricular confessions and confessionals

Müller's *Ornatus* contains instructions on the construction of a confessional with compartments, which was an innovation at the time. It included a picture to make the intention clear. The father confessor's compartment had to incorporate a placard that gave the wording for absolution and for other such matters.[93] Thus Müller had embarked on the assumption that many confessors were ignorant of the proper form. We do not know whether such a placard was necessary in the two confessionals that were installed in Antwerp's cathedral in 1567. The cathedral acquired a third confessional in the following year. The first Jesuit Church might have obtained its first specimen in 1575.[94] The first true ensemble of confessional boxes was installed from 1617 to 1618 in the Dominicans' church, St Paul's Church (Sint-Pauluskerk): six in each side aisle.[95] It was only in the 1620s in the Jesuit Church that these ecclesiastical furnishings were depicted for the first time.[96] We know from source material that confessionals were already being used in Antwerp in the late sixteenth century; however, an auricular confession (or 'shrift') may have been more easily recognised as the sacrament of penance, which would explain why this type of confession continued to appear in paintings for so long.

The windows

Do the paintings of church interiors represent reality in terms of the windows? Do these representations conform to Borromeo's instructions? Almost all of the windows in Antwerp's cathedral were brightly coloured stained glass, which would have allowed little sunlight to filter through. However, most of the paintings show clear, monochrome glass windows. The paint is applied thinly and as a glaze. The figures, mostly apostles, are transparent. These effects show that the painters were following Borromeo's guidelines, namely that pure, divine light in sacred buildings must not be refracted by coloured glass. Painters were thus not portraying reality but Borromeo's demands regarding Roman Catholic reforms. In 1615 and 1616, during the Twelve Years' Truce, still more colourful stained-glass windows were installed as additions to the ones still intact.

Altar rails

Borromeo prescribed that altar rails enclosing the side altars had to give priests sufficient space to officiate. This area had to be situated on a platform (the *bradella*). An enclosure to fence off the officiating area could be at hip height.[97] Antwerp's canons decided in 1603 that parish and cathedral altars had to be fenced off because, as we know from a complaint made by Bishop Malderus (1611–33), the laity – including women, the impertinence! – were pushing forward practically eye-to-eye with the altar in order to see how the priest was celebrating Mass. What is more, those same people were also ensconcing themselves in the sacristy and the choir stalls.[98] It would appear that these rails achieved their goal after a while, because they were taken away again towards the end of the seventeenth century.

Morals and propriety

Altar rails served a further purpose, however: they were intended to stop women lighting or snuffing out candles on the altar. Sacristans had to keep their mothers and maids from doing this. In Antwerp's churches one could buy candles from the 'wine woman' (*wijnvrouwtje*). It was from her that the priest would also fetch wine, water and bread prior to the Mass. She was in attendance the whole day long. Did she also sell water for the holy-water font? Canon Michael Breugel found it highly inappropriate that priests were compelled to have contact with the wine woman before their service.[99] I know of only one small painting in which she appears: a work by Hendrik van Steenwijck II in Kassel (fig. 8).[100]

Fig. 8
Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Interior of a Gothic Chapel*, 1621, oil on panel, 25 × 19 cm, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, Kassel, inv. GK 75

In his defence of the church interior's embellishment with paintings and of the veneration of statues, Molanus also took up the matter of candles, 'which have no significance in themselves, [but] become precious through faith'.[101] Like many Protestants, Erasmus held a different view; for him, inner faithfulness was more important than outward shows of worship: 'How many are there that burn candles to the Virgin Mother, and that too at midday when there is no need of them! But how few are there that study to imitate her in pureness of life, humility and love of heavenly things, which is the true worship and most acceptable to heaven!'[102]

Dogs

Early in 1565, a ban was issued on chickens and hunting dogs in Milanese churches.[103] Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, made it known in that regard that the balusters or shafts of altar rails should be placed sufficiently close together to prevent access by dogs. Such altar rails can be seen in paintings from the Netherlands, where we can also see dogs sniffing each other and, often in prominent view in these pictures, extinguishing the scent of their fellow canines by urinating over the spot in question. They also left other calling-cards behind, as we can tell from an interior view of Antwerp's St Walburga's Church (Sint-Walburgiskerk) in which the sacristan is shovelling something onto a dustpan and chasing a dog away with a whip (cat. 43).

'Aristocratic' hounds are often on view, wearing collars that indicate their ownership by someone from the nobility. Dogs running free were also an everyday reality. In depictions of Antwerp's churches – and also later of Protestant churches – dogs are almost never on a leash. According to the Bible in *The Apocalypse of St John*,

dogs cannot enter paradise.[104] They were seen as creatures governed by instinct, not endowed with reason and free will, and most of all not having the least knowledge of God.[105] When children in a painting are seen in close proximity to a group of dogs, particularly if the scene shows children playing, it can allude to the idea that a child has yet to reach 'the age of reason'.

Bartholomäus Wagner (c. 1520–71) was familiar with the problem of dogs in churches, driving the animals away with 'a bur-reed'[106]. His book *Der Layen Kirchenspiegel* contains a chapter 'on the abuses of dogs in church'. He remarked: 'What should a Christian think when he spies in church a dog roaming freely, which is a great abuse? Am I not at once such a dog when I enter that church and fail to bow before the Blessed Sacrament and the altar? I take not holy water, neither do I make the sign of the Cross, so is it also with the dog. Were I to chatter in the church, were I not to listen to the sermon, were it not my concern, would I then not be like to a dog? ... A dog hath not his home in a church. The same is true of the Christian who, even as I have said, remaineth a dog: he may not enter the Temple of Salvation on high; it belongeth not to him. Cast out those dogs, sayeth Holy Scripture, cast out those people who in their base characters are equal to dogs.'[107] Wagner's words on failing to honour God through one's conduct are reminiscent of the aforementioned visit and report by Michael Breugel. The scenes with dogs shown here (cats. 16 and 25) probably correspond to Wagner's intention and appeal.

Behaviour

At a time when the Neeffs output was still increasing, the etchings by Abraham Bosse in *La Noblesse françoise à l'église* (1629) also illustrate the requirements of correct behaviour in church: a Catholic nobleman removes his hat (plate 2), a lady removes her mask (plate 5) and a hymnal or prayer book is seen to be in use (plates 3, 7 and 13). Plate 10 shows how a gentleman genuflects (fig. 9). The depiction of a nobleman kneeling at the altar may have proved quite useful to any recently converted Huguenots.[108] The church interiors by Bosse and Neeffs can be seen as a form of catechism: you are meant to kneel throughout the greater part of the Mass, but you stand during the reading of the Gospel and you bow after the elevation of the consecrated Host and chalice.[109]

Fig. 9
Jean de Saint-Igny and Abraham Bosse, *La Noblesse françoise à l'église*, 1629, etching, plate border 15.2 × 9.8 cm, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, inv. EST-368

Kneeling – 'actus exterior'

The visible act of kneeling – before the high altar, to pray, during the Mass and before holy statues – was a legitimate form of devotion for Catholics, but became the subject of debate among Protestants and was rejected. The Council of Trent had responded to this by stating that such outward displays as kneeling and praying before holy statues and religious tableaux had an exclusively spiritual dimension; it was a way of paying homage without being in the least idolatrous.[110] The kneeling seen in Flemish church interiors is one of the most powerful Catholic staffage motifs. It can be seen that Protestant artists of the early seventeenth century still held different views, as is evident from Baudous's satirical illustration in which people in the foreground kneeling down to pray are presented as superstitious idolaters over whom Satan is gleefully rubbing his hands (fig. 1).

Epilogue: Flemish depictions of churches as the bearers of a Catholic message[111]

There is thus nothing accidental about the figures, decor and furnishings in Flemish church interiors – fictional and real alike: this staffage carries a message.[112] The exhibition shows the variety of such messages. Both Catholics and Protestants had the use of Gothic church interiors, so we can only deduce the religious denomination in question from the staffage.[113] Jean Moflin (?–1587), curate to Philip II, Spain's ultra-Catholic king, owned an interior by the Lutheran painter Hendrik van Steenwijck I[114], and in 1607 among the works that François Perrenot, Count of Cantecroix, had indirectly inherited from his uncle, Cardinal Antoine de Granvelle (1517–86), was '*Une perspective d'église de Henrich Steenvicht*'. From church interiors in the possession of the Antwerp printer Jan Moretus or of Johann Meerman in Cologne, we can deduce that they were of interiors with staffage.[115] When in 1713 the possessions of King William III of England (died 1702) came under the hammer in Amsterdam, included among them was a small work described in the catalogue as a 'Catholic church or perspective by Peeter Neeffs'. The painting's staffage must have made it apparent in this case, too, that the church served the Catholic community.[116] Staffage formed the pictorial and denominational basis for religious paintings. It seems, at least to me, that staffage with small figures, as seen during the beginning of the church interiors genre, was first and foremost a form of proclaiming the faith: Propaganda Fidei.

That the output of paintings by the Neeffs family increased so markedly in the first quarter of the seventeenth century is above all attributable to the special refinement and sophisticated illusionism of their works.[117] Other contributing factors included the pride taken in Antwerp's churches, particularly the imposing Cathedral of Our Lady; Catholic conviction in the true faith; and the will among Catholics to signal their opposition to the interiors emerging from the Northern Netherlands and their reformational messages. Based on a kind of artistic resistance, there was possibly also the desire to promulgate the Catholic rite in mobile artworks, given that, during the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–21), it was not permissible to openly perform acts of Catholic worship in the Republic; in its negotiations with the Republic during the Truce, Spain had waived practising the religion openly in the northern territories.

By contrasting the paintings of church interiors against the actual situation in the Southern Netherlands, we are alerted to the denominational dimension of these works. Jeffrey M. Muller has pointed to the role of non-mobile goods in propagating and reinforcing the Catholic faith in these regions: the altars in the cathedral, the citadel as a symbol of Spanish rule (with the statue of Alva and the citadel church dedicated to Philip, the Spanish king's titular saint, and to Saint James, the patron saint of Spain), the statue of the Virgin Mary at the City Hall, bells and statues of the Virgin Mary in the streets, etc.[118] To this we can now add a new piece to the jigsaw, this time a mobile one: images of churches with accompanying staffage.

We can now understand why the Neeffs family painted so many fictitious church interiors of the same kind. They have often been accused of being monotonous and stereotyped, but they did serve a deliberate purpose: they were an ideal and powerful medium to spread the faith. It was not so important whether or not the stage of the staffage with all its activity and retables represented a fictional or real church interior – although illustrations of real interiors would have had a greater impact and would have been especially effective among the well-informed.

NOTES

1 My sincere thanks to Thomas Fusenig, Ulrich Heinen, Claire Baisier, Joost Vander Auwera, Reinhard Gruhl, Esther Meier, Jan Nicolaisen, Léon Lock and Bert Watteeuw for the support that they have given me. This contribution elaborates upon ideas first advanced by me in a lecture at the colloquium organised by Prof. Dr Johann Anselm Steiger at the University of Hamburg 'Das Gebet in den Konfessionen und Medien der Frühen Neuzeit' (May 2013): *Katholischer, gemalter Kultus in Antwerpen um 1600 – Hendrik van Steenwijck I (c.1550–1603), Hendrik van Steenwijck II (1580–c.1660) – Peeter Neeffs I (c.1578–after 1656), Peeter Neeffs II (1620–after 1659) – Sebastiaen Vrancx (1573–1647)*. Inspiration for the title 'Catholic life in the churches of Antwerp' came from Marie Juliette Marinus's excellent study, Marinus 1995.

2 See Hendrik van Steenwijck, private collection, cat. 29, using the same interior perspective.

3 See p. 29 (Van Bassen), for another addition of such a late date. Howarth 2009, pp. 47–8 voices the suspicion that Brueghel placed his figures over an older staffage painted by Steenwijck I; Thomas Fusenig endorses this suspicion in Fusenig 2012. For the Budapest picture see Ertz 1979, p. 509. Klaus Ertz and Christa Nitze-Ertz (Ertz and Nitze-Ertz 2008–10, p. 1356, cat. 594) consider that two passages in letters from Jan Brueghel I to Federico Borromeo in Milan refer to one and the same painting (Ambrosiana, Milan). At present, there are two known paintings by Hendrik van Steenwijck I, with subsequent staffage by Jan Brueghel I, and two documented hints. Thus this may refer to two paintings: to the 'perspettiuo' conserved in Milan, which he purchased for 220 scudi (from Hendrik van Steenwijck II?) and furnished with figures 'al modo mio', with his wife and two children 'fatto del natural'), and to the work in Budapest (6 March1609: 'un quadrettin de Hendric van Steenlbyck. Io farra in detto quadret alcun figurini').

4 Mayer-Himmelheber 1984, p. 121.

5 By this means brotherhoods called for prayers to be said for souls in purgatory: see Marinus 1995, p. 266. For *Lex Horti* (rules of behaviour in a garden) see Hamm and Mainz 2000-01, pp. 32, 35, 68–9, 80. The statues on Rubens's *porticus* in his garden in Antwerp held tablets with rules of behaviour: see Heinen 2009, pp. 57–8.

6 See Nicolaisen 2012, p. 296.

7 All the information on *huycks* (garments incorporating a veil and cap) was generously offered to me by Bert Watteeuw, who, in his doctoral thesis 'Nieuwe perspectieven op de cultuur van het portret in vroegmodern Vlaanderen' yet to be published on Capita Selecta, sheds new light on many aspects relating to this fashionable jet black accessory from Antwerp. Peter Paul Rubens, *Hélène Fourment*, 1630, black, red and white chalk on laid paper, 61.2 × 55 cm, The Courtauld Gallery, London.

Wenceslaus Hollar's earliest etchings date from 1632–6. A woman with headwear just like this can be seen in 'Mulier Antverpiensis bonae qualitatis' in ***Theatrum Mulierum***, London 1643; see www.europeana.eu/portal/record/90402/ RP_P_OB_11_496.html.

8 It would seem that an indulgence was acquired through the purchase of a devotional rosary. Thus Jan Brueghel I thanked Cardinal Borromeo for three rosaries that he had sent him, which had been furnished with an indulgence: 'il gratismo letra con tre medaigli et tre Corona benedetta con indulgenti' (Crivelli 1868, p. 64).

9 Cat. 15, not in Härting 1989; see pp. 163–5 for more illustrations of Frans Francken II's exceptional scenography. Regarding the dating of cat. 15, see the graceful portrayal of the Virgin Mary in the ***Tempelgang van Maria*** dated to 1640, in private ownership (Härting 1989, cat. 243). Frans Francken II must have peopled Steenwijck's interior in Antwerp two or three years before his death; Steenwijck was living in the Netherlands at that time.

10 Baisier 2008, p. 30.

11 With regard to dating the installation of the statues of the apostles, see Baisier 2008, p. 45. The same interior by Peeter Neeffs I and others is in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels, inv. 1355, signed 'PEETER/NEEffsH.', panel, 55 × 84 cm; also in the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, inv. G 414, panel, 48.8 × 64.4 cm, signed 'Peeter Neeffs 1652 // Dou ffranck', i.e. Frans Francken III (1607–after 1667), see Gero Seelig, cat. 135 in Mettingen 2010.

12 See Mettingen 2010. See also ***Interior of St Walburga's Church*** in Antwerp by Anton Günther Ghering, which is now kept at St Paul's Church (Sint-Pauluskerk) in Antwerp, inv. E28; regarding this work, see Baisier 2008, pp. 227–31.

13 There is a similar and near contemporary interior of the cathedral showing the handing out of bread at that location, painted by Peeter Neeffs I, Frans Francken II and Simon de Vos, in the Gemäldegalerie Kassel, inv. GK 68. For poor relief in Antwerp, see Härting 1997. For almoners as part of the social elite and social control, see Marinus 1995, p. 262 and Timmermans 2008, p. 52.

14 Concerning guild ceremonies at funerals after 1625, during the deanship of Cornelis van der Geest, see Geudens 1891–1904, vol. I, pp. 112–17. Regarding the white catafalque of a woman, see Baisier 2008, p. 46. For women in guilds, see Marinus 1995, pp. 264–9; for ***koorlijk*** (a funeral service in which the bier is placed in the chancel) see pp. 234–5; for ***katafalk*** (catafalque) see p. 235.

15 Duverger 1991, p. 184 (20 November 1644). The identity of the 'Van Eck' or 'Sieur van Neeck' who provided the staffage for Neeffs's two churches remains an open question; see Duverger 1969, pp. 117, 125.

16 Letter of 6 March 1609 to Cardinal Borromeo in Milan; see Crivelli 1868, p. 119.

17 See Noach van der Meer II, for example, in Le Brun,1793, p. 62; regarding Paris, see Duverger 1969.

18 Heinen 1996, pp. 20–5. People's desire for enjoyment and their eye for quality becomes apparent when the Parisian art dealer Jean Picart speaks to M. Musson in Antwerp about 'den beste die Nefts gemackt heeft' ('the best that Neeffs has produced') (19 December 1659, Duverger 1969, p. 223) or when he orders 'eenighe dinghe van den jongen Franck, maer wat goeds' ('something by the young Franck, but something good') (18 March 1663, ibid., p. 231).

19 There is one exception to that lack of attention: Hensel, 1998, pp. 34, 36–7, 45. In the staffage, in the columns that appear partially in front of the retables (referred to by him as 'idols'), and in the variations on the cathedral's actual interior, Hensel perceived an iconoclastic fury in the picture plane consciously staged by the Lutheran Steenwijck. Hensel's interpretation is in contrast to the analysis of religious subject matter as a Catholic message, as discussed below.

22 For depictions of picture galleries, see Speth-Holterhoff 1957; for paintings as a means of Catholic persuasion see Muller 2008; for the retables in Antwerp's cathedral, see Antwerp 2009; 'gloednieuwe barokke altaren' (brand new baroque altars) is a quotation from Baisier 2008, p. 28, where it relates to an interior by Peeter Neeffs I (Hermitage, inv. GE 6019; staffage painter unidentified).

21 Schwartz 1966–67; Connell 1980, here note 2; Hamburg 1995, here p. 21.

22 Rotterdam 1991, p. 79.

23 Baisier 2008, p. 276.

24 Thomas Fusenig, 'Religion, Moral und Wissenschaft', in Wuppertal 2009, p. 155.

25 See Bartholomeus van Bassen, ***Interieur van een denkbeeldige kerk met het graf van Willem de Zwijger***, signed and dated 1620, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 1106, Schwartz 1966–67.

26 Marinus 1995, pp. 238–9.

27 Abel Grimmer painted church interiors in the manner of Hendrik van Steenwijck I. The ***Interieur van de kathedraal van Antwerpen*** of 1595 (42.2 × 57.8 cm), for which he supplied not only the architecture but also the staffage, and which was auctioned at Sotheby's, London, as lot 28 on 4 July 1990, is thought to stem directly from a work by Steenwijck (see https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/images/record?filters[kunstenaar]=Grimmer%2C+Abel&query=&start=12). Regarding such copies by Grimmer after Steenwijck, see cat. 9; for the cathedral interior, see Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. 196 canvas, 90.5 × 121 cm, Howarth 2009, I.33; see also Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, fig. 19, p. 171.

28 Isabella was the daughter of King Philip II of Spain. Albert VII, Archduke of Austria, was also a Habsburg: he was the son of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. Both had grown up in Spain and had participated in ***autos-da-fé***. Albert was Grand Inquisitor for Portugal as well as Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, becoming Primate of Spain as a result. He was dismissed from that position as a result of his marriage.

29 In 1616, the Guild of Our Lady of Glory (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Lof) received indulgences again. They are summarised in Op de Beeck 1978 (2010), p. 62 (with thanks to the author, who placed the highly informative work at my disposal); Marinus 1995, pp. 278, 280.

30 Probably engraved by Philips Galle; published by Hieronymus Cock; copy Hamburger Kunsthalle 22.4 × 29.4 cm. See Hamburg 2001. Drawing: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-T-1919-35; see Mielke 1996, no. 45; Serebrennikov 1986. Perhaps Bruegel's inspiration for the outsize cross in the middle came from the central panel in the triptych of ***The Seven Sacraments*** by Rogier van der Weyden (1399/1400–64), but another source of inspiration may also have been the over-lifesize rood cross in Antwerp's cathedral (fig. 4 Vrancx). Regarding this rood cross, see Baisier 2008, p. 22. For Rogier van der Weyden's ***Seven Sacraments*** altarpiece (c.1448, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 393–5), see Roland 1947, pp. 99–114.

31 For example, a work from 1590 by Hendrik van Steenwijck I on canvas, 73 × 106 cm, that was auctioned on 9 April 1990 as lot 15 at Ader-Picard-Tajan in Paris. Maillet 2012; Maillet M-1189; Howarth I 17; see also Baisier 2008, p. 49, notes 169, 170.

32 ***Robert de Baudous's Kerkinterieur met preek, doop en avondmaal*** (after c.1600–c.1625; 367 × 465 mm) bears the title in the picture plane itself '***Vera imago veteris ecclesiae apostolicae. Ware abcontrofeiting der alter Apostolischer Kirchen***' (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, object no. RP-P-1893-A-18169, Hollstein c.1450–1700 (1997), 116, collector's label Lugt 2228; see www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-1893-A-18169). A copy of the ***Vera imago ecclesiae papisticae*** can be found at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Hennin collection, C 20783 and C 20782). See also figs. 62 and 63 in Göttler 1996, pp. 176–7. None of these illustrations shows the related caption. In a three-part print by Baudous satirising the Roman Catholic Church, published by Jacob Gheyn in 1605, the Catholics have the characteristics of animals (see www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-78.827, www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-78.828 and www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-78.829). Regarding the reliance of Baudous's two-part work on a coloured version, perhaps produced earlier, by Marten van Valckenborch I, the father-in-law of Hendrik van Steenwijck I, see Fusenig, 2003 (2006), pp. 118–9 and figs. 6–8.

33 From Luther, ***Vermahnung an die Geistlichen versammelt auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg 1530***, quoted in Aland 1981, p. 330 ff. See introduction to Hamburg 1983. As early as 1546, Lucas Cranach II made a woodcut with the title ***Unterscheid zwischen der waren Religion Christi / und falschen Abgöttischen lehr des Antichrists in den fürnehmsten stücken***. To the right of the separating pillar the Pope is trading indulgences; to the left the people are listening to Luther preaching. See www.akg-images.de/archive/Unterscheid-zwischen-der-waren-Religion-Christi---vnd-falschen-Abgottischen-lehr-des-Antichrists-in-den-furnehmsten-stucken-2UMDHUK79OP.html.

34 Due to limited space I am able to deal here only with a few extracts from such seminal publications as Marinus 1995, Pasture 1925, and others.

35 Marinus 1995, p. 159 ff.

36 Marinus speaks of 'a Catholic bulwark' (p. 244) with 'some few fissures' (p. 245). Among the well-educated, Latin was initially spoken in the Jesuit sodalities, which became increasingly numerous after 1608; see Antwerp 1985, p. 33; in 1664, there were approximately 3,800 members within the sodalities as a whole.

37 The ravaged Catholic structures in the cathedral city of Ypres were restored as late as 1616. See Pasture 1925, p. 348.

38 Fusenig in Wuppertal 2009, pp. 151–2.

39 Marinus 1995, pp. 44, 217.

40 Marinus 1995, p. 113.

41 Marinus 1995, pp. 113, 206–7.

42 See Paleotti 1582 (2002) for the Italian text, which is also available at www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/scritti_paleotti.pdf. For the English translation see Paleotti (1582) 2012. It is also available at https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=qXK-avVr9ToC&pg=PA45&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false.

43 Paleotti felt that painters had to have received theological instruction, otherwise their works would lack credibility; see Heinen 1996, pp. 30, 217, note 236; Hecht 2012, pp. 376–80. Concerning the religious conviction of painters, see Nils Büttner, 'Antwerpen 1585: Künstler und Kenner zwischen Krieg und Neubeginn', in Leuschner 2016, p. 46.

44 Pasture 1925, p. 340. There were 46,000 inhabitants in 1591, 54,000 in 1612 and 56,948 in 1645. One of the few depictions of the administering of Holy Communion is a drawing by Jan van der Straet made in around 1595 (Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna, inv. 7955), to be found in Benesch 1928, p. 21 and at https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/images/231355.

45 See Pasture 1925, pp. 342–3 for the conflict between ***réguliers*** and ***séculiers*** in administering the sacrament. Marinus 1995, p. 216 for inhabitants.

46 Marinus 1995, p. 165.

47 Pasture 1925, p. 360; Put 1990, p. 25. In the retable of the Schoolmasters' Guild in Antwerp's cathedral Jesus is seen in a church and is giving instruction to, among others, Calvin, Luther and Erasmus; see Peeters 2014, cat. 11.

48 Pasture 1925, p. 371; Put 1990, p. 25.

49 Pasture 1925, p. 369.

50 See www.flandrica.be/flandrica/items/show/526.

51 Marinus 1995, p. 211.

52 Pasture 1925, pp. 344–5, 355.

53 Göttler 1996, p. 170 ff. Cornelius a Lapide (***Commentaria in duodecimo prophetas minores***, Antwerp 1625, pp. 615–6) wrote that all who could afford 'houses with fine paintings' and 'houses furnished well and with taste' also had to assist in renovating churches. For the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine, helping to appoint and furnish churches in need was a more immediate offering to God than the giving of alms (Göttler 1996, pp. 38–9).

54 In 's-Hertogenbosch, offertory-boxes were installed for that purpose; see Pasture 1925, p. 347. In several of the depictions of Antwerp's cathedral a table is visible opposite a side entrance. Donations may have been collected there, perhaps by means of a pax; see fig. 5 for a depiction of such a table; cat. 38 (drawing by Vrancx); Howarth 2009, II.B.122, Christie's, Amsterdam, 10 November 1992, lot 91; II.B. 123, Christie's, London, 10 July 1992, lot 4.

55 In 1645, 46 priests in the cathedral celebrated paid memorial masses; see Timmermans 2008, p. 200. Guilds also took advantage of the altars; in 1677, the altar of the Guild of Our Lady of Glory (Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Lof) was granted a plenary indulgence; see Op de Beeck 1978 (2010), p. 68. Generous donations to the guild's offertory-box were also welcomed.

56 See Maillet 2012, under Peeter Neeffs I and Peeter Neeffs II.

57 De Bie 1661, p. 155 (www.dbnl.org/tekst/bie_001guld01_01/bie_001guld01_01_0084.php).

58 Instances of cavalier perspective came only later, as seen in Anton Günther Ghering; see Heinen 1996, p. 234, note 20. The often mediocre quality of reproduction of the interior and figures perhaps points to the objectives being largely of a catechetic nature.

59 According to Baisier 2008, p. 277, only 12 views in the years 1593–1668 were true to life.

60 Hollstein c.1450–1700 (1997), nos. 568–91. Thanks to Thomas Fusenig for mentioning the exhibition catalogue, Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 50, pp. 227–31.

61 Among others, see Hendrik van Steenwijck I, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. 4225, panel, 52 × 70.5 cm, dated 1573, monogrammed HvS, Howarth 2009 I.1, Maillet 2012, M-1175.

62 Howarth 2009 I.5, private collection, USA, dated 1573, showing baptism in the chapel; see interior showing the christening procession, panel, 31.5 × 47 cm, signed and dated 1586, Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels, inv. 6683, Howarth 2009, I.12; Maillet 2012, M-1184.

63 Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Interieur van een gotische kerk*, dated 1590, canvas, 73 × 106 cm, Ader-Picard-Tajan, Paris, 9 April 1990, lot 15; Howarth 2009, I.17, in a private collection; Baisier 2008, p. 49; Maillet 2012, M-1189. The two following works, dating between 1590 and 1600, show a baptism, baptismal entourage, confession, holy water being taken, a dog and a cripple: Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Kerk met doop*, panel, 49 × 66 cm, private collection, Brussels, Maillet M-0423, Howarth, I.84; and *Kerkinterieur*, panel, 34 × 39.5 cm (colour image no. 16 in Worcester 1983).

64 Sotheby's, London, 4 July1990, L.28, signed, dated, panel, 42.2 × 57.8 cm; for Grimmer, Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 200; Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, p. 171, fig. 19.

65 Baisier 2008, p. 49.

66 Regarding the collaboration between both types of painters, see Härting 1989, pp. 160–6.

67 Fusenig 2012, p. 147.

68 See note 3 in this essay. Canvas, 169 × 146 cm, inv. 1533, Howarth 2009, I.25; Härting 1989, cat. 467, p. 163, fig. 142 as Hendrik van Steenwijck II.

69 Härting 1989, p. 161, cat. 466, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, inv. 695, provenance: Frederik Hendrik, stadholder quarter, The Hague, 1632. Regarding Francken's contact with Paul Vredeman in Amsterdam, see Härting 1989, pp. 19, 92, cat. 431.

70 Marinus 1995, p. 206.

71 We do not know whether the same system was employed in Antwerp as in Leuven, where beggars in the act of begging had to display the badge that belonged to their specific group (Brussels 1991, p. 408). In 1601, 507 burghers received relief; see Härting 1997, pp. 107–23, here p. 122. Regarding the distribution of food and clothing by a portrayed almoner in front of the cathedral, see Härting 1989, cat. 274 (staffage by Gonzales Coques, 1639) and Lisken-Pruss 2013, cat. 50.

72 Göttler 1996, p. 16ff. and the previous discussion of cat. 15 in this essay.

73 Göttler 1996, pp. 16–17.

74 See also the picture by Noach van der Meer II (fig. 5): engraving after an interior by Hendrik van Steenwijck II (Howarth 2009, II B 122) with staffage by Jan Brueghel I in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. For the painting, see Ertz 1979, cat. 598; http://janbrueghel.net/object/interior-of-a-gothic-church) and for the engraving, see www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-OB-23.443.

75 Thomas Richter, 'Instrumenta pacis: der Kuss von Bildwerken und Reliquien im Friedensritus der Heiligen Messe', in Bierende, Bretfeld and Oschema 2008, p. 137.

76 See Grieten and Bungeneeres1996, pp. 103–4. Commissions were made by the Brotherhood of Sint-Huybrecht, the Civic Guard ('Kolveniers') Guild, the Association of Mercers ('Meerseniers') and the Coopers' Guild ('Kuipers'). See the work by Bartholomeus van Bassen dated 1622 with staffage by Esaias van de Velde, *Classicistisch kerkinterieur met kerkdienst en wandelaars* in which a monk is studying the Bible at a table on which there is a paten, but no pax: https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/images/118074. Sotheby's, New York, 27 May 2004, L.99a.

77 Antwerp 1985, pp. 12–13; Muller 2008.

78 Mayer-Himmelheber 1984, p. 135.

79 Mayer-Himmelheber 1984, pp. 136–7; Hecht 2012, p. 318ff.

80 Emile Henri Van Heurck, *Les Images de dévotion anversoises*, Antwerp, 1930.

81 This is how Charles Borromeo saw it, for example; see Mayer-Himmelheber 1984, p. 133. And, as expressed by Pope Gregory I (c.540–604): 'Illiterate men can contemplate in the lines of a picture what they cannot learn by means of the written word', see Marcel Gielis, "'De beelden zijn der leken boeken". Enkele iconografische aantekeningen op de thematiek van de Antwerpse ambachtstriptieken', in Antwerp 2009, pp. 205–11.

82 The same dichotomy can be seen in still lifes from the first decade of the seventeenth century; see Segal 1986, pp. 56–60.

83 Baisier 2008, pp. 10, 19, 54, 277.

84 Concerning musical culture in the Chapel of Our Lady of Glory (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Lof) in Antwerp's cathedral, e.g. at daily Vespers, see Op de Beeck 1978, pp. 42–8.

85 For example, in two *kunstkamers* (rooms displaying artworks) by Willem van Haecht II (1593–1637): *De kunstkamer van Cornelis van der Geest in Antwerpen tijdens het bezoek van de aartshertogen Albrecht en Isabella in 1615* (Rubenshuis, Antwerp, https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/images /251675) and *Alexander de Grote bezoekt het atelier van Apelles* (Mauritshuis, The Hague, https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/images/25711).

86 Ertz and Nitze-Ertz 2008–10, p. 1679. See two men wearing turbans in a Peeter Neeffs painting of 1654, Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 7.

87 See http://research.frick.org/montias/home.php.

88 Hecht 2012, p. 149. Bellarmine 1586, vol. 1, p. 2184; Miletto 2004, p. 137.

89 Concerning post-Tridentine, instructional and disciplinary texts, see Hecht 2012, pp. 32–5.

90 Concerning local ecclesiastical measures against undesirable images, see Heinen 1996, pp. 25–30.

91 Antwerp 1985: in 1613, Antwerp's Jesuit college had 600 students; in 1648, there were 680; see also Put 1990, p. 26.

92 See Mayer-Himmelheber 1984.

93 Thümmel 2000, pp. 57–228. See http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb11115708_00350.html for a depiction of the confessional, p. 162.

94 See Baisier 2008, p. 187, for the confessional in the Jesuit Church from 1575 or 1640.

95 The Dominicans were very popular as confessors. However, although it has been asserted that Rubens's confessor was Michael Ophovius, Prior of St Paul's Friary (Sint-Paulusklooster), this does not stand up to scrutiny; see Heinen 1996, p. 216, note 244.

96 See Baisier 2008, pp. 78–80, concerning depictions of confessionals in the Jesuit Church. On Saturdays, 26 confessors at the church could hear the confessions of up to a maximum of 4,000 people (five minutes per confessant): Marinus 1995, p. 170. Seven new confessionals were ordered for Antwerp's cathedral between 1615 and 1662; see Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 313.

97 Mayer-Himmelheber 1984, pp. 121–2.

98 Marinus 1995, p. 207.

99 Marinus 1995, p. 208 (visits from 1593 and 1606).

100 Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Binnenaanzicht van een gotische kapel*, 1621, panel, 25.4 × 19.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, Kassel, inv. GK 74, Howarth 2009, II B34.

101 Hecht 2012, pp. 148–50, here p. 150, note 146, Molanus 1570, Cap. XXXII, fol. 66v.

102 Hecht 2012, p. 148; Desiderius Erasmus, *Laus stultitiae* in the Dutch translation of 1560 by Johan Geillyaert, see www.dbnl.org/tekst/eras001lofd01_01/eras001lofd01_01_0003.php.

103 Mayer-Himmelheber 1984, p. 124.

104 Douay-Rheims Bible (NT 1582), The Apocalypse of St John, 22:14–15: '(14)…and may enter in by the gates into the city. (15) Without are dogs, and sorcerers…'

105 Wannenmacher 2015, pp. 298–9. According to the Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas, dogs were not endowed with reason and not created in God's image. Whether Martin Luther actually said that little dogs would go to heaven cannot be authenticated. Thomas Ketelsen cites sources which indicate that painters such as Veronese and Rembrandt had to overpaint 'immoral' dogs, in Hamburg 1995, pp. 66–8.

106 Regarding the driving off of a dog with a bur-reed, see the sacristan in cat. 43.

107 The text of *Der Layen Kirchen spiegel* can be found at http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb11071537.html. The quotation is on p. 37.

108 Hecht, 2012, p.147, fig.: Abraham Bosse, Jean de Saint-Igny invenit, dedicated to Cardinal and 'Conseillier et Almosnier du Roy et de la Reine Mère' Claude Maugis, Paris c.1629. All the poses are shown together with part of a Gothic church interior as the background.

109 Marinus 1995, p. 211.

110 Hecht 2012, pp. 144–50.

111 Thijs 1990; Antwerp 1985, p. 22.

112 Since the 1570s in paintings by Hendrik van Steenwijck I; see Howarth 2009, I.5, *Interior of a Gothic Cathedral with a Baptism*, private collection, USA.

113 For church interiors in the Northern Netherlands and the review of famous churches from the Republic, see Andreas Gormans, 'Perspectief, doorzicht. Formen und Spielräume bildlicher Illusion' in Leonhard, Weber and Fritzsche 2013, pp. 83–107, here p. 90; Almut Pollmer-Schmidt, 'Meditatie. Zur Verwandtschaft von Meditation und Kunstbetrachtung', in Leonhard, Weber and Fritzsche 2013, pp. 109–35. These starting points are complemented by the cultural, sociological and theological-historical ideas in the present essay.

114 Howarth 2009, pp. 26, 115, I.40.

115 Howarth 2009, p. 107ff., 117, I.12, I.14 and I.45; Howarth I, 11-14, with Jean Moflin's monogram in paintings, Brussels, Belton House and in a private collection; see also Fusenig 2012, pp. 133–5, figs. 2, 3, for Moflin's monogram in Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Church Interior*, dated 1586, Catharijneconvent, Utrecht.

116 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK-A-287, see www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/SK-A-287; see Jonckheere 2008, claim 19, p. 259.

117 Nicolaisen 2012; Nicolaisen 2005, p. 128.

118 Muller 2008, see www.cairn.info/revue-dix-septieme-siecle-2008-3-page-441.htm.

Singers in a church: implications of voice, sound and movement in post-iconoclastic interiors by Van Steenwijck, Grimmer and Neeffs

Björn Schmelzer

For M who could hear who could see

A motif in the margin

One of Van Steenwijck's earliest interiors hangs in the Kunsthalle in Hamburg (fig. 1). There is plenty to discover for anyone who looks carefully: these 'perspectives', as they were called in the sixteenth century, seem to have been made to satisfy the curious gaze. 'Viewing pleasure' was often cited as the *raison d'être* of a 'minor genre'.[1] This pleasure – which scholars are content to historicise so as not to have to dig any further – also appears, however, to justify an absence of acute interpretation or accurate description. Painted church interiors have traditionally been admitted to the realm of art history primarily as examples of painterly virtuosity (the execution of a perfect architectural *trompe-l'œil*) conceived as mass products, in which the embellishing details or staffage are intended to heighten the picturesque quality. This is given concrete shape in an artistic division of labour that would appear to rule out any overarching concept.

The *figura* – in this case the perspectival representation of a church interior – was conceived by the person who signed the work, while the *parergon* – here the staffage – was often added by different painters. The genre lacks by definition a set of themes or *historia*: art historians focus instead on the technical aspects or on the relationship between the painting and the underlying, painted reality. The church interior is an artistically dated curiosity, which, at the height of the Baroque, presented an almost empty Gothic church with – rather than allegories, symbols or motifs – primarily anecdotal practices associated with Counter Reformation ideology.

Approaching the genre 'against the grain' might begin by intuiting that the depicted emptiness or common practices are part of its internal logic, or even of a strategic hermeticism. But it could also take a particular motif as its starting point: one that seems at first sight trivial or somewhat arbitrary, with a picturesque value at best – a motif that certainly does not feature in the pictorial canon. 'Singers in a church' nevertheless appear in the work of Hendrik van Steenwijck, Abel Grimmer and (to a lesser degree) Peeter Neeffs – painters of Antwerp interiors from the late sixteenth century onwards. They are not depicted all that often, yet too continuously to assume that the motif generated a certain, possibly unconscious interest. Art-historical literature is totally silent on the subject of 'singers in a church' and – unlike organs or processions, for instance – the motif does not even appear in specific lists of staffage elements.[2] The fact that 'singers in a church' are not acknowledged in this way is because what the singers are doing – basically adding lustre to religious services – is so much part of what we expect to see in a church interior, and their musical practice – the mobilisation of voices – has so little physical anchoring (unlike an organ, for instance), that their presence becomes almost invisible. Reading the result of their actions in the painting would appear impossible by definition. The importance of the motif is hard to judge, moreover, from the volume of Van Steenwijck's, Grimmer's and Neeffs's production: in so far as we can judge based on the surviving works, the frequency with which 'singers in a church' appear is on the meagre side.

However, there are other, possibly related, reasons why the 'singers in a church' motif could actually be of interest. In the first place, it enables us to approach the genre of the interior view from a detail we can use as a *point fixe* for the relationship between *ergon* and *parergon*. This relationship is frequently one of subordination, yet – as in the case of landscape – nevertheless forms an intrinsic part of the genre and is hence subject to interaction, deliberate blurring and reversal. In what way do these movements between principal and secondary matter affect the motif as a fixed point? Secondly, the motif is not a symbol or an emblem, but an operator, representing a group of performing singers, bringing the art of painting to a limit as it is unable to depict sound. Thirdly, the motif of singers in a church can lead, through the specificity of the action and the relationship with the practice of representation, to insights into space and how it is rendered. How does the relationship function between the (im)possible two-dimensional space on the one hand and sound as an acoustic, affective quality of that space on the other? What might this relationship deliver for painting?

We could ask whether the painter's decision to depict singers was prompted by decorative considerations, for instance, or by a choice on the patron's part. The motif does not, after all, appear very often, which might indicate a more haphazard presence, with no intrinsic connection to the representation or its content. The fact that the motif indicates the ultimate boundary of

Fig. 1
Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, c. 1585, oil on canvas, 90.5 × 121 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. HK-196

Fig. 2
Jan van Eyck, *Madonna in a Church*, c. 1438, oil on oak panel, 31 × 14 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, inv. 525C

painting's capability, means that it has the capacity to link the inside of painting with its outside. Provided, of course, that we are able to pin down this intrinsic connection. To do this, we will have to go back some way in time.

A precedent: singers in Van Eyck

Let us begin with an example that is frequently viewed as a precursor and proto-paradigm of sixteenth-century architectural painting: Jan van Eyck's *Madonna in a Church* (fig. 2).[3] Little attention has been paid to the two angels that Van Eyck presents in the choir of the church as two singers at a choirbook. The viewer sees them singing through the doorway of the parclose screen. They are dressed in colourful chasubles, which stand out against the monochrome church interior and resonate with the red and blue robes of the large Madonna in the foreground, who takes up virtually the entire space of the Gothic interior.

The work might originally have been part of a diptych, of which the panel that traditionally showed the patron has been lost. In 1993, Craig Harbison concluded on the basis of existing research that the Madonna in the nave of the church must be a 'blown-up' version of the stone statue behind her.[4] This enlargement is the result of a hallucination. Van Eyck shows how a stone Madonna in a niche in the choir screen, painted in the same kind of grisaille as the Gothic interior, has been brought to life and has taken on gigantic proportions. Harbison takes a different view here to Panofsky, who attributed the Madonna's proportions first and foremost to her symbolic function as *Ecclesia*. Rather than representing a symbol, the panel has a *machina memorialis* function; in other words, it is the diagrammatic or operative representation of a hallucinatory perception.[5] Van Eyck does not present a symbolic state of affairs, but a transformation – a process of change accompanied by the spatial components that bring it about.[6] The result is the animation of the Madonna statue.[7] However persuasive Harbison's analysis might appear, it takes no account of the two singers in the choir. Van Eyck nevertheless paints them in colour, along with the other animating elements, and they stand on the same axis as the face of the living Madonna and her colourless and lifeless artefact. Even more remarkably, Harbison cites the crucial role of chants, incantations and hymns, which Van Eyck either places in the panel itself as framed prayer tablets, or as a text on the frame, the purpose of which is to bring the statue to life. The original frame was stolen in the nineteenth century.[8] The motif of the chants on the edge of the image was sufficiently important for the Master of 1499 to include it in his copy of the work.[9] Various examples can be

found in Brabant mysticism of visions triggered and stimulated by liturgical chants. At the beginning of her seventh vision, the thirteenth-century mystic Hadewijch says: 'On a certain Pentecost Sunday I had a vision at dawn. Matins were being sung in the church, and I was present. My heart and my veins and all my limbs trembled and quivered with eager desire.'[10] Beatrice of Nazareth also had her first vision while listening to the antiphon *Propter nimiam caritatem*.[11]

The best-known example of an attempt to bring a statue to life through song is the medieval version of the classical myth of Pygmalion. The latter – thought of in the Middle Ages as a musician and magus – imitates liturgical chants in an attempt to breathe life into the statue with which he has fallen in love. In the end, the statue only truly comes to life following divine intervention.[12] In the same way, Van Eyck has set the magical act within the safe walls of a church building, thereby placing the transformation beyond suspicion. The patches of light that fall on the church floor via the north side allude to the same divine intervention as the medieval telling of the Pygmalion myth. By painting the chants on the physical edge of the work, Van Eyck suggests that he is working at the limits of his art: painting a mystical transformation. It is evident from the similar method he used for the St Barbara grisaille in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, that this was an intentional strategy on his part. Van Eyck imitated the methods of the stonemasons who work on the Gothic tower behind St Barbara – thus achieving something that painting normally cannot, namely showing a live process of transformation – by creating a grisaille, of which only part is coloured. In this way, he offers the viewer a work in progress as a material *trompe-l'œil*, while having the content of the grisaille – the work on a stone Gothic tower – correspond with the physical surface in an unfinished state. Van Eyck seems to comment here on the humanist *paragone* debate – the supposed competition between the arts, which essentially boiled down to a dispute as to which was able to breathe the most life into inanimate matter.[13] Is he playing here with the classical topos of *signa spirantia* – statues that breathe or that appear so lifelike that they merely lack a voice (*vox sola deest*), as Petrarch put it?[11] If so, and in the spirit of the Devotio Moderna, it would not have been strange for him to present the *pneuma* – according to an old tradition the breath that the demiurge blew (literally 'inspired') into the lifeless matter – as an intermediary between the lifeless stone statue and the animated Madonna. Both the topology and the colouring of the *Madonna in a Church* panel clearly seem to suggest this: the stone statue in grisaille and the liturgical song of the angels in colour result in the transformation of a full-colour Virgin Mary: the grisaille represents the matter but also the husk that awaits the animating sound of liturgical chants.[15]

Van Eyck places the two stages or anchor moments in the transformation process – the stone statue and the living Madonna – in a Gothic setting. However, even this 'living Madonna' – no matter how lifelike she might be – is merely a depiction, he seems to suggest, inspired by proto-Reformation ideas of the Modern Devotion: the *pneuma* or *spiritus* – the 'inspired' breath or moving air that is active when the hymns are sung and has an animating power – is located at the edge of the representation. This edge is an essential and active part of the work and deconstructs the illusion of the living statue, which a naive worshipper might take as reality.[16] While painting might be able to show two moments simultaneously, continuous animation can only be brought about and accompanied by singers. The panel is more than an illusionistic *trompe-l'œil*: it also fulfils a 'diagram' function, in the sense that it maps out the conditions and limits of a mystical transformation process. Painting is capable of fixing processes and transformations within an image and making them permanent; Van Eyck realised, however, that this occurred at the expense of the inner life of the image. The voices of the singers, the incantations and polyphonic chants, therefore form a limit – a borderline it is impossible for the art of painting to transcend. It is no coincidence then that Van Eyck – and his follower, the Master of 1499 – should have set down the hymns capable of triggering the hallucination on the frame of the painting, or as a frame within a frame. The frame is an integral part of the work and has many more operative or performative aspects than hitherto suspected; at the same time, however, it represents the absolute boundary between the art of painting and that of sound. Van Eyck's panel seeks to inscribe itself within a larger performative context.[17] It is not a response to the absence of miracles, as Harbison claims: on the contrary, Van Eyck is interested in the functioning of miracles, how they come about (a statue that comes alive and assumes the proportions of a Gothic church under the influence of singing) and what painting can do with that. Van Eyck does not represent the space

but indicates it diagrammatically: it constitutes itself as an operative experiential space, the two affective parameters of which are light/colour and sound (chant). The Gothic space in Van Eyck is neither straightforward symbol nor pure decoration or setting. This also explains the 'vague' or 'anexact' perspective that Van Eyck uses which cannot be viewed in isolation from operative and symbolising processes, of which the complex, synaesthetic animation of the Madonna sculpture is central.

Singers in Dürer

Together with the introduction of perspective in the late Middle Ages the art of painting has recognised that space is not merely defined by quantitative parameters but just as much by qualitative ones – the invisible causes of physical and affective movements in space. The latter also has the effect, however, of confronting the medium with its own limits. When it came to the rivalry between the different arts, painting therefore set out to prove that it was capable not only of imitating nature but also of surpassing it. Erasmus wrote in praise of Albrecht Dürer that the German painter was able to paint what could not be painted: 'fire; rays of light; thunderstorms; sheet lightning; thunderbolts; or even, as the phrase goes, the clouds upon a wall; characters and emotions – *in fine*, the whole mind of man as it shines forth from the appearance of the body, and almost the very voice.'[18] The voice is the ultimate limit of the art of painting, not only because it cannot be heard in a two-dimensional plane, but also and above all because – with its capacity to 'breathe into' or 'inspire' – it is the first and ultimate affective parameter of the space itself.[19]

When Dürer visited the Church of Our Lady in Antwerp in 1521, the voice was not only a qualitative parameter for the scale of the building but almost a quantitative one too: 'Our Lady's Church at Antwerp is so vast that many Masses may be sung there at one time without interfering one with another. The altars have wealthy endowments; the best musicians that can be had are employed; the Church has many devout services and much stonework, and in particular a beautiful tower.'[20] Why does Dürer not use more visual or geometrical parameters to describe the size of the church? Would he not have provided a more precise impression of the immense space if, for example, he had described the distance and proportion between the piers or bays? Although Dürer boasted an advanced knowledge of geometry, the same approach is also apparent in his *Underweysung der Messung* ('Course in the Art of Measurement'), in which he attempts to translate operative knowledge into more theoretical, mathematical language, but frequently falls back on the use of metaphorical images, thereby regulating verbally transmitted operative knowledge as diagrams.[21] It is all the more remarkable that a painter of all people should have described the scale of a church in aural, psychoacoustic terms. We can imagine Dürer 'measuring' the acoustic blending or blurring while walking around. The visual aspects – the altars and the wealthy endowments – were of secondary importance to him. The acoustic parameter is subsequently described as a spatial quality too: the best singers are engaged. This spatial quality is further specified using a striking juxtaposition: devout services and (devout) stonework. It points towards a collaboration, a sympathy between the rituals that take place in the building and the architecture itself, the way in which these rituals – of which the sung services form part – are granted a place within the decorative construction of the building. Dürer's Gothic church is not stratified or perspectival like those of Vredeman de Vries or Van Steenwijck. It is not an optical space but a tactile-acoustic one, which stimulates and entwines the senses as one walks around it.[22]

Historians often speak of a paradigm shift that occurred somewhere between Dürer and Hans Vredeman de Vries – a shift heralded by humanism and the Reformation. We believe, however, that something else was needed as well in order to transform a paradigm into an affective reality. That something is iconoclasm, culminating in the 'Iconoclastic Fury' that swept Antwerp in 1566 and 1581. Iconoclasm does not refer solely to the disputing or smashing of images: it was the inaugural, empathetic act that turned perspective into a new form of visibility and which was rendered concrete in the empty space.[23]

'Icono-clasm'/'musico-clasm'

The shift that occurred in the perception of space after Dürer – and above all after the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566, in which the destruction in the cathedral in Antwerp became the paradigm for the trauma of iconoclastic violence – cannot be demonstrated more effectively than via the propagandistic montage of two German engravings dating from around 1600 (fig 3 and 4).[24] They articulate in a diagrammatic manner the dialectic between two regimes of religious practice via a geometry of perception. On the topmost image, we see a space *à l'antique* – a church interior stripped of any ornament and given over primarily to seated worshippers hanging on every word of the preacher in the centrally positioned pulpit on the right of the space.[25] On the bottom image is a large Gothic church, the architectonic structure and design of which are hidden by decorative works, altarpieces, statues and paintings, but also by the teeming human figures, who meander and criss-cross through the space to devote themselves to the various liturgical and paraliturgical practices.[26] The fact that perspective was not only a question of architecture, but equally one of regulating human activity is evident from the geometrical treatment of the groups of worshippers. On the topmost image, the formations are determined by rectangles and triangles – classic Euclidean geometry – while the swarming Catholic operations on the bottom image are measured using a spiralling geometry of ellipses and serpentines. It is not difficult to see a visual articulation in this of Dürer's late-Gothic affective space; a segmented and endlessly fractalised space, which branches off constantly down to the smallest elements of the retable. The space is not perceived as a unity, but is divided into religious-optical territories with a psycho-aural ambience, which are charged as affective zones by the intensity of reliquaries and sanctified artefacts. Calvinism, by contrast, took a stratified perspective to achieve a return to the taut lines and transparent space of antiquity.[27] The engravings also express a fundamental psycho-acoustic difference in space. The Gothic space reveals an unbearable cacophony of noises, chants, orations and so forth.[28] The Calvinist space, by contrast, is dominated by silence (organs and choirs were banned), regulated and mediated by the voice of the preacher directed towards the silent worshippers.

Koenraad Jonckheere has movingly described the moment when artists encountered their destroyed works, wrecked altarpieces and smashed sculptures on the floor of the cathedral the day after the disastrous iconoclastic violence of 20 August 1566.[29] Too little attention has been paid to the fact that the iconoclasts attacked not only visual icons, but also organs and choirbooks.[30] Fragments of the latter – manuscripts from the workshop of Petrus Alamire – were discovered not so long ago being used to stiffen the covers of books published by the Plantin press.[31] The destruction of the cathedral's various organs in 1566 was so rigorous that the pipes were fit for nothing better than for children to blow in the streets.[32] A new paradigm – a new perceptive regime – was not simply the result of a humanist discovery, therefore, but equally of an act of destruction,

Fig. 3
Robert de Baudous, *Protestant Service* (*Vera imago veteris ecclesiae apostolicae*), *Church Interior with Sermon, Baptism and Holy Communion*, c. 1600–25, engraving, plate border 36.7 × 46.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-1893-A-18169

Fig. 4
Robert de Baudous, *Catholic Service* (*Vera imago ecclesiae papisticae*), engraving in *Recueil. Collection Michel Hennin. Estampes relatives à l'Histoire de France*, vol. 8, nos. 708–809, 1577–87, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, inv. Réserve QB-201

Fig. 5 (detail of fig. 1)
Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, c. 1585, oil on canvas, 90.5 × 121 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. HK-196

Fig. 6
Johannes Stradanus (Jan van der Straet), *Encomium musices*, collection of engravings published by Philips Galle, c. 1589-90, 22 × 28.4 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. BI–1904–77–16

which must have had immense affective repercussions, not only among visual artists but musicians too. These after-effects cannot be reduced to the sociocultural choices artists make in times of crisis or to a polarisation of articulated opinions: they were also expressed in a conceptual and operative field, an artistic, cultural and religious *terrain vague*. Van Steenwijck was a Lutheran artist, but he worked in a political climate that was split primarily between the extreme visions of Calvinist iconoclasts and Counter-Reformation Catholics. The production of artworks such as paintings of church interiors cannot simply be interpreted in this climate as visual ideology or propaganda. These works seemingly play conceptually on an ideological ambiguity that was also an issue in the private sphere of religiously mixed communities and sub-groups, and which might explain their commercial success: works of this kind could serve as a private exegesis or *lectio spiritualis*, and what was known in the public sphere as 'viewing pleasure'.

Singers in Van Steenwijck

The painting by Van Steenwijck referred to at the beginning of this essay is one of his earliest in which singers can be seen (fig 5, detail of fig. 1).[33] They stand somewhat hidden at a large choirbook in the north chapel, on the left of the painting. The effect is the same as in Van Eyck's *Madonna in a Church*: once you have noticed the singers, you can no longer ignore them and their presence becomes steadily more important. Van Steenwijck depicts a great deal of activity in the north side of the church, just like Van Eyck, who gave it an almost magical character, imbued with divine light. A procession of women advances in the centre foreground, guiding the viewer's eye towards a baptistery. Unlike the singers in Van Eyck who, as it were, breathe the animating sound into the stone statue and animate the Madonna in the same way, the singers here are shown at one side, mostly from the back. A singer with a large pair of spectacles or a magnifying glass stands to the rear, suggesting that Van Steenwijck borrowed this *mise-en-scène* for the singers at the choirbook from an engraving by Stradanus in the collection *Encomium musices*, which Philips Galle published around 1589–90. The similarity between the two is striking (fig. 6).[34]

Van Steenwijck was a Lutheran and is sure to have known Luther's *Encomium musices* ('Praise of Music') of 1538,[35] in which the Protestant reformer argues that nothing can exist without sound, with which everything in creation is imbued.[36] Even the invisible and intangible 'air' (*aer*), suddenly becomes sonorous, audible and understandable when brought into movement: a wondrous mystery of the spirit (*spiritus*), by which Luther referred to its fundamentally physical animating and 'inspiring' capacity (*anima*). This idea of the total musicality of creation culminates in the most refined polyphony. Van Steenwijck ingeniously choreographs the subtlety of the air set in motion by the singers by having its vibration resonate with an element that is a classic example of *bewegtes Beiwerk*:[37] the fluttering veil of a woman walking at the head of a small procession of other women. In so doing, he highlights a visual motif to which, like the formation of the singers, he would return in a variety of other works. The motif was also borrowed by Grimmer and Neeffs, although it loses its original visual dynamism in the latter case. Looking at the procession more closely, one is struck by the contrast between the first woman with her fluttering veil and the more static

women behind her in their distinctive *huycks* (floor-length mantles and caps). The group as a whole develops a movement whose gradual acceleration is visible in the hems of the robes, as if in a Muybridge photographic study of motion. The effect recalls the different stages of a snail's locomotion, which Van Steenwijck builds up dynamically from a subtle detail – the hems of the heavy, static *huycks*. The woman leading the procession has the air of a classical *nympha* (nymph) – a dynamic, prototypical figure that chiefly appears in Italian painting from the fifteenth century onwards.[38]

Is this a baptismal procession, as so frequently assumed?[39] Van Steenwijck apparently wants us to think so: we see a church official at the entrance on the left holding a candle and seemingly waiting for the women to arrive. But where is the baby?[40] And why are there no men, as we normally find in baptism scenes in church interiors? Baptisms in the late sixteenth century were, moreover, performed immediately after the birth of the child, to avoid the risk of it dying unbaptised in the first week of life. The mother was mostly unable to attend so soon after giving birth. What Van Steenwijck presents here looks more like what was known until the early twentieth century as 'churching'[41] – the young mother's first visit to the church once she had recovered her strength. She generally wore a white veil on her head and was accompanied by other women – neighbours and midwives – carrying candles. There is little evidence of this in Van Steenwijck. The women are walking from south to north, moreover, while churching usually proceeded through the north entrance in a southerly direction. Could Van Steenwijck not have had the procession moving in the other direction just as easily? And why is the young mother depicted as a classical nymph with a fluttering veil walking towards a baptistery with no child in sight? There are several young mothers with children in the foreground too: the central panel of the triptych in the north chapel shows the Adoration of the Virgin and Child by the Three Wise Man. The triptych on the other side, meanwhile, shows Mary and her baby son posing for St Luke. The couple sitting on the ground against a column nearby suggest Mary and Joseph in a typical motif from the Rest on the Flight into Egypt.

Van Steenwijck seems to be referring here to an ambiguity in Luther's criticism of Candlemas – a feast associated with the Purification of Mary and the tradition of churching. Luther sharply criticised the notion that a mother had to go to church after giving birth because she was 'impure' rather than simply because of her faith, like anybody else; nor did he see any reason to refer to the 'Purification of Mary' as she had been free of sin at the moment of the Annunciation.[42] Although he rejected the custom of blessing candles during the feast of the Purification, it is not entirely clear why Luther ultimately accepted both the feast and the tradition of churching. The women in the procession without candles, walking in the opposite direction, and the veil in the hands of a nymph, virgin and mother at the same time, might be an allusion to Luther's ambiguous commentary on Catholic rites.[43] Like the singers who add lustre to a Catholic religious service in a *mise-en-scène* that evokes a text by Luther, the movement of the nymph at the head of an ambiguous procession of women might contain another reference to Luther's commentaries. In *Encomium musices*, he compares polyphonic singing with the *chorea* – a paraliturgical dance performed by clergy in various places in Europe, which survived until the eighteenth century, albeit in the regimented and channelled form of a procession.[44] Just as the nymph was a symbol of rebirth and immortality, so the *chorea* was traditionally associated with the Resurrection and was chiefly performed on Easter Sunday accompanied by Resurrection hymns.[45] Luther's notion of *chorea* in the *Encomium musices* also links the nymph and the procession of women with the lost work by Willem Key shown on the fourth altar, which is noteworthy for the dynamic figure of the risen Christ and the inertia of the overburdened pedlars in the foreground.[46]

According to Luther, polyphonic singing generates a divine *chorea*, of which the nymph's fluttering veil is a token. But there are other signs of movement too: the carved Gothic retable located nearby contains a small monochrome figure, painted in the same grisaille (or rather 'brunaille' – fig. 7). It seems to turn away from the polychrome statue of the Madonna. It is too large for the shrine, and as if wishing to step out of the frame its right foot has already moved beyond the edge. Would it be too far-fetched to link this gesture on the part of a figure in a shrine with the animating sound of the singers at a choirbook? Van Steenwijck quotes verbatim here from the *mise-en-scène* of two of the upper panels from Van Eyck's *Lamb of God*. One of these panels shows Adam's foot crossing the wooden frame (Adam is no longer a grisaille but has been brought to life!); a group of singers near the founder of the human race stand at

Fig. 7 (detail of fig. 1)
Hendrik van Steenwijck I, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, c. 1585, oil on canvas, 90.5 × 121 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. HK-196

Fig. 8 (detail)
Cornelis de Hooghe, *Vera et accurata curiae Antverpianae delineatio*, engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-55.195 (detail)

Fig. 9
Franciscus Costerus, *De cantico Salve Regina septem meditationes*, Antwerp, Chr. Plantin, 1587, Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, inv. MPM_OD_A-1129, fol. A1v.

a choirbook performing polyphony.[47] In Van Steenwijck's work the figure is that of Brabo, the mythical founder of Antwerp, who was particularly revered by sixteenth-century humanists. He is primarily identifiable from the severed hand he waves above his head, which he cut off the giant Druon Antigonus. Brabo is represented in this way on the wrought-iron top of the fountain in Antwerp designed by Quentin Massys, and he also appears wearing Roman armour in a niche high up on the new Town Hall in Antwerp's Grote Markt (fig. 8). Why has Van Steenwijck placed Brabo here in a Gothic retable? And above all, why does he already have one foot over the edge, like Van Eyck's Adam?[48]

The interior that Van Steenwijck has painted here is a montage, albeit one that is so firmly based on Antwerp's cathedral that the viewer immediately conjures up the image of that paradigmatic space. The artist has not only manipulated the real space structurally, however, but also substantively. He has only painted five bays, for instance, rather than seven, and he has also moved the organ from the south side at the partition between the choir and the transept, to the north side – the same imaginary but contrary movement, in other words, as the direction of the women in the churching motif in the foreground, from south to north. If we compare this interior with the Budapest Van Steenwijck (cat. 30), we see that the so-called pedlars' altarpiece with the triptych by Willem Key also hung on the fourth pier on the south side, together with a wooden Gothic altar on the fifth pier, which apparently survived the Iconoclastic Fury of 1566 (and therefore the fire of 1533), but that all the other panels had disappeared.[49] Van Steenwijck moved both altarpieces in his composition from the south pier to the corresponding one on the north side. He also, lastly, placed a large coloured statue of the Madonna in the empty Gothic niche. At first sight, it looks like a Virgin of Mercy with a small, solitary grisaille figure seeking protection under her cloak. The placement of an oversized Madonna statue in a dilapidated Gothic retable alongside a moving Brabo figure does, however, suggest another *mise-en-scène*, which might also provide a *terminus post quem* for the work's creation.[50] In 1587, two years after the Catholic reconquest of Antwerp by the Spanish Habsburgs, the Brabo statue was removed from its niche on the Town Hall and replaced, under the auspices of the Jesuits, with a statue of the Madonna by Philippus de Vos. The statue was triumphantly inaugurated and ceremonially honoured with a sceptre and crown on the Feast of the Annunciation on 7 April 1587 (fig. 9).[51] Van Steenwijck re-enacts this propagandist performance by reframing it in the niche of the old Gothic retable – a far from neutral survival of the pre-iconoclastic era. He might therefore have painted the work between 1587 and 1590, based on the length of time for which the Madonna's Town Hall *putsch* will have been sufficiently fresh in people's memories to be visually relevant. In so doing he fitted out a completely outdated interior with altarpieces that no longer existed.[52]

As Hensel insightfully observed, the monochrome piers function as a vertical grid over parts of the older

decorations. All the same, Van Steenwijck has deployed this architectural censorship much more subtly than Hensel realises: he has created a highly dynamic and ambiguous *terrain vague* of meanings. Ought we to interpret the representation of animated figures in either grisaille or colour as a reference to Bruegel?[53] Van Steenwijck reversed the position of the Christ Child and the sceptre so that it seems at first sight as if Jesus has ended up beneath the vertical, censoring stripe of the pillar. On closer examination, however, the Child – identifiable from the aureole and the same robe as the sculpture on the Town Hall – is emerging from beneath Mary's cloak and seems to look up triumphantly at the monochrome stripe that sought to paint him out. The juxtaposition of materials, figures, colours, light and sound in the same plane contains an echo of Luther's idea from the beginning of his *Encomium musices* that nothing exists without sound; that everything, in other words, is subsumed in the same creative, animating order, despite the monochrome of the post-iconoclastic space.

Bernard Prévost has used André Chastel's term *espace de résonance* to describe this kind of 'interactive' space created by the painter, which appeals to the 'viewing pleasure'/*lectio spiritualis* of the (informed) beholder: the stratified, perspectival space is inwardly differentiated by the painter through the application of affective zones, vague delineations and topological connections between figures, materials, symbols and representations.[54] Van Steenwijck seemingly wished, therefore, to give the perspective space a personal segmentation of his own. There is evidence on the north side of a circulation of movements and influences between different materials and figures. On the south side, meanwhile, there are two vertical lines set back in space, which represent the two new orders. Van Steenwijck has also chosen this side to hang the church regulations, which probably did hang in reality on the south side, judging from the painted church interior in Budapest. Behind these regulations there is nothing to see: the column censors all the altarpieces located behind it, just as the iconoclastic and Calvinist order had done. To the right of these we see a series of altars that articulate the new Counter-Reformation order, coloured by the Spanish military and absolutist regime. *St Luke Painting the Madonna's Portrait* re-opens the possibility of visual production; this is followed by *St James 'Matamoros' and the Battle of Clavijo*, highlighting the Spanish military's struggle against unbelievers;[55] and lastly *The Arrest of Christ*, set in a dramatic *tenebroso* or *chiaroscuro* belonging to the new Catholic pictorial order from Italy. The nave of the church resembles a neutral zone, from which a direction has to be chosen.[56] The catafalque also stands here. The north side is a zone of ambiguity, a *terrain vague* in which eras and traditions interact, and in which transformations and movements take place that do not entirely efface the old order. It is also a retrospective zone, which confronts the viewer with demons from the past: lost altarpieces, moving statues, and a contrary, ambiguous churching procession of a nymph.

Fig. 10
Abel Grimmer, *Church Interior with Singers*, oil on panel, 35.6 × 47.2 cm, Private collection, England

Singers in Abel Grimmer

Abel Grimmer likewise painted a church interior with singers (fig. 10).[57] The attraction of his work lies in the deceptive simplicity of the figuration. Grimmer is an heir to Bruegel in this respect, and seems to have borrowed the latter's conceptual and hermetic figuration. What we get here is not a church interior in which singers just 'happen' to be singing: he takes them from the side chapel in which Van Steenwyck had given them a not necessarily subordinate position and positions them in the centre, the nave of the church. Now they are 'singers in a church interior'. At the same time, there is something paradoxical about this focus on the singers. They are gathered around the choirbook facing towards the choir, and hence with their backs to the viewer. Not only can we not hear them singing, we cannot see them doing so either. In Van Steenwijck's case, the engraving by Stradanus on which he based his *mise-en-scène* offers

an explanation; Grimmer, by contrast, has explicitly opted to show his singers from the rear.[58] Van Eyck positioned his singers so that we can see them singing and so that their breath blows in the direction of the stone statue.

Grimmer increases the number of singers at the choirbook (to 12?), but compensates by stripping them of any personality or facial expression. We end up with an undefined plurality of choristers. We do not hear them singing nor do we see them. At most, Grimmer allows us to sense that there is singing taking place in this large, monochrome space. The anonymity of the singers is shared by the others present: all the figures stand with their backs to the viewer.[59] The artist arranged the composition straightforwardly: the singers add lustre to a Mass being celebrated by two priests at an altar by the fourth pier on the left. Grimmer's interest in church interiors might initially have been sparked by his background as an architect, but a more important motivation seems to have been the opportunity to present figures in a large church even more anonymously than those in a Bruegelian landscape.[60] The other four men who are present, also painted from the back, seem wholly absorbed in the singers' performance. Further into the nave, we notice a swallow's nest organ, which Grimmer brings into the foreground in the Sorrento version of the picture and gives a much more prominent position, closer to the singers. The monochrome church creates an empty and abandoned impression. The worshippers merely seem to emphasise the emptiness. What Howarth wrote about Van Steenwijck firmly applies to Grimmer too: 'The staffage ... is rather mysterious; the dark clad figures typically either face towards the main altar, accordingly showing their backs to the viewer, or lie hidden in deep shadow. This creates an atmosphere of tension and unease, sometimes heightened by a funeral or baptism procession in the traditional costume of the Antwerp ladies with their distinctive hats.'[61] We also see three kneeling women dressed in the *huycks* characteristic of the time, to which Grimmer lends an almost ornamental and abstract value. One of the women kneels a little further away before an altar that recalls the empty (lost) Gothic carved retable in the Van Steenwijcks in Hamburg and Budapest. Two other people can be seen at a prayer stool against an uncoloured stone column. Grimmer seems deliberately to have placed the kneeling worshippers before the void of a wooden retable or the grisaille of a column – an at first sight absurd position, which assumes meaning in the light of the post-iconoclastic situation. Faith is no longer a question of seeing, of visibility; seeing confronted the worshipper with an empty space with no aura. What the worshippers see no longer offers any guarantee of divine intervention and has been rendered permanently suspect.

The kneeling worshippers are not stimulated by images of saints and cannot even see the priest celebrating Mass at the altar. The two visible altarpieces in the nave are *St George and the Dragon* and a *Crucifixion with Mary and St John* – two themes that were the subject of debate and propaganda in both Reformation and Counter-Reformation circles.[62] These images are not, however, visible to the worshippers in the church.[63] What the eyes perceive no longer offers a guarantee. Even if the space were filled with images, it would by definition be empty.

Faith is no longer a question of seeing, but of hearing. *Credere per aurem* could be the motto of Grimmer's interior. This is confirmed not only by the positioning of the worshippers and the central *mise-en-scène* of the singers, but also by the images on the two altarpieces in the north chapels in the foreground.[64] The themes of these altarpieces are an indication that they ought to be linked to the activity of the singers. The one in the first chapel on the left shows Christ by the Sea of Galilee. The full sail of the ship out on the water tells us that a strong wind is blowing. According to St John's Gospel, the resurrected Christ appeared to the apostles as they were fishing, but they did not recognise him. Only when he spoke did they know him: faith became something aural and acoustic.[65] The following chapel contains an altarpiece with the Annunciation. The message to Mary from the angel is an aural experience *par excellence*. The greatest mystery of all – the Incarnation itself – is aural and was known in the Middle Ages as the *conceptio per aurem*, the fertilisation of the Virgin Mary through the 'inspiration' or 'breathing in' through her ear by the Holy Spirit.[66] The presence of the singers at a choirbook is not, therefore, a decorative touch on Grimmer's part, but an essential element in the exegetical operation of the painting. Mystery is represented in Grimmer via a detour, namely the depiction of worshippers whose view of the visual representations is hindered and through the accentuation of the aural, acoustic aspect of the mystery.

Is there any sign in Grimmer too of the influence of Lutheran texts? The two panels in the foreground are linked to the singers by the motif of moving air – a theme that Grimmer might have drawn from Luther:

the moving air that reveals the total musicality of creation. This theme is also linked in the Annunciation to the incarnation via the old connection of *pneuma/spiritus*.[67] Rather than showing the apostles already fishing in the painting with Christ at the Sea of Galilee, the ship with the rounded sail also seems to suggest the scene in which Jesus calms the storm.[68] In his foreword to the Latin Psalter, Luther compares the human heart with a ship on a stormy sea, lashed by gales. Günter Bader has shown in his interesting analysis of Luther's texts that the Protestant reformer felt that music ascended from pure air 'an almost nothing, that cannot possibly be nothing', into organised and affective tones of human polyphony. The image of the human heart as a ship blown about on a stormy sea encapsulates this development of music as a primary movement of air into affective artistic music.[69] What Prévost and Chastel called an *espace de résonance* once again seems to justify an interpretation of this kind: the proximity of singers at a choirbook to an Annunciation and a ship at sea with rounded, wind-filled sails. Like Van Eyck, Grimmer brings sound, 'what could not be painted', into the painting. But unlike Van Eyck, who articulates the peripheral position of sound on the frame, Grimmer not only deprives his figures of faces, but also of any possibility of seeing. The empty niche of the Gothic altar and the grisaille of a column towards which their eyes are directed, is intensified by our inability to see the singers or to hear them singing. Or rather, just as the worshippers do not believe by seeing, but by hearing, we can see how the worshippers hear the singers, whom we ourselves cannot see or hear singing.

It is important to stress that the Iconoclastic Fury and Calvinism were as disastrous for musical culture as they were for visual culture. What has been termed the 'Silent Iconoclasm' coincided with the Calvinist Republic in Antwerp in 1581–4, which had drastic consequences for music in the cathedral. After all, the Calvinists prohibited any use of the organ or of liturgical chants in religious services. In this way, Grimmer plays with the limits of painting: the viewer sees figures (worshippers) who cannot see, but who can hear, while the viewer also gets to see what they cannot or may not see, without hearing anything of the chants at the choirbook.

Singers in a night chapel in Van Steenwijck, Grimmer (?), Avemann and Neeffs

A composition by Van Steenwijck seemingly adopted the central position of Grimmer's singers, while making several crucial shifts. The side chapel in which Steenwijck placed the singers in the interior view from Hamburg is given a central role. It has been moved forwards, taking up half of the surface area and vying with the nave of the church depicted in the right half of the work. Another important adjustment is that the religious service is held in a darkened church, lit only here and there by candles. The central position of the singers in the chapel and the absence of a priest at the altar suggests that the service is Vespers. It is not clear whether the Oslo version of this type of picture is the oldest, and whether it ought to be attributed to Van Steenwijck I or to Grimmer (fig. 11).[70] The position of the chapel differs somewhat from other, similar works. The painter has placed it more centrally in this case, so that the choir cannot be seen via the nave on the right. As a result, the work has less depth than the others, while conversely gaining in drama and intimacy. As Howarth noted, the almost abstract female figures dressed in *huycks* seem particularly to refer to Grimmer.[71] One such figure stands on the far left, entirely covered by her *huyck*. It is unclear whether her confession is being heard, but the painter might also be playing here with the ambiguity of the representation. All the figures are dressed conspicuously in black, and the singers are not wearing surplices over their robes either. This clearly heightens the chiaroscuro effect, but also the Reformation feel of the

Fig. 11
Hendrik Van Steenwijck I or Abel Grimmer, *Night Chapel with Singers*, oil on panel, 41 × 59 cm, The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, inv. NG.M.69

Fig. 12
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, 1649, oil on panel, 41 × 53.5 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersbrug, inv. GE-645

work. Ceasing to wear a surplice was often a way for a former Roman Catholic priest to act as a Reformed preacher. A number of Catholic services, however, were also sung without surplices, including the 'dark services' during Holy Week or less important ones. There are other cases too, moreover, in which Van Steenwijck depicts a choir with and without surplices (see cat. 19).

Another element highlighting the ambiguity with which Van Steenwijck (and Grimmer?) play, is the way in which Neeffs adopted this *mise-en-scène*.[72] In this night chapel, the singers lose their central position, which is now given to a priest who, monstrance in hand, delivers the blessing at the end of the service.[73] All the singers are shown here kneeling at the choirbook (fig. 12). As Ursula Härting has rightly noted, we might speak of a re-territorialisation of the night chapel motif, in which the original ambiguity that was so clearly present in Van Steenwijck and Grimmer gives way in Neeffs to an unambiguous, Counter-Reformation programme.[74] In his case, however, singers in the chapel only appear in services held in the dark, and are always absent in daytime.[75] In this regard, he follows the example of Van Steenwijck's later work, which seems to link the presence of singers with a nocturnal setting. It has already been suggested that Van Steenwijck was the inventor of the church interior at night. This is certainly the case for the mysterious nocturnal scenes in a Gothic church showing a pagan service dedicated to Baal.[76] Thomas Fusenig has even stated that Elsheimer could easily have discovered the artificially lit night scene before he went to Italy via the studio that Van Steenwijck set up in Frankfurt after leaving Antwerp in 1585.[77] The introduction of artificial light and darkness together with a choir at a choirbook seems, therefore, to have been an 'invention' with a specific meaning, and by no means merely a chance decorative element. An ongoing conceptual development is more likely, such as that also suggested by the works of Van Steenwijck and Grimmer with singers in daylight. Whereas the daylight churches are characterised by their monochrome and grisaille, the night chapel, with its scarce, yet strategically positioned candlelight in chiaroscuro, seems to give a new, deeper interpretation to the exegetical *terrain vague*. How ought we to read the arrangement of singers viewed from the back around a choirbook, such as we find in Grimmer, in the new setting of a night chapel, shrouded in darkness and lit solely with candles?[78]

The episodes of iconoclasm in Antwerp in 1566 and 1581 not only resulted in artworks in which the authenticity of the image is questioned, but also revived the parallel debate surrounding the *paragone*. As has been demonstrated on a number of occasions, the art of painting was accompanied – certainly from the fifteenth century onwards – with an intrinsically painterly metadiscourse, the critical stimuli for which came not only from early Italian humanism, but equally from northern religious and proto-Reformation movements like the Devotio Moderna. The rivalry that existed between the visual arts – painting, sculpture and architecture – was crucial to this, although poetry and to a lesser extent music, which belonged to the seven liberal arts, and which were in that sense above the debate, were also implicated. Music tends not to be approached in contemporary scholarship, possibly because the role of music in the controversy surrounding images does not appear particularly apposite. The night chapel with singers shows perhaps that this role, while possibly dormant, was not insignificant. Music is viewed in Leonardo da Vinci's *Paragone* as the sister of painting, with one important difference: while painting guarantees permanence over time, music dies at the very moment of its birth. That is to say, that the condition of its existence is in fact its disappearance, or rather, it disappears the moment it appears.[79] 'Music cannot be called otherwise than the sister of painting', Leonardo wrote, 'for she is dependent upon hearing, a sense second to sight, and her harmony is composed of the union of its proportional parts sounded simultaneously, rising and falling in one or more *tempi armonici* ... But painting excels and ranks higher than music, because it does not fade away as soon as it is born, as is the fate of unhappy music.

On the contrary, it endures and has all appearance of being alive, though in fact it is confined to one surface.'[80]

These strengths that were inherent to painting became a problem in the controversy over images, which assumed unprecedented ferocity during the Iconoclastic Fury. The fact that depictions do indeed have a lasting existence and may, moreover, possess a deceptive degree of animation even though they are two-dimensional realities, serves only to intensify the confusion on the part of naive worshippers. In placing singers in a night chapel, Van Steenwijck seemingly wishes to rescue painting, not by having it emerge victorious once more from the fray, but by reducing it to those qualities that make music its inferior sister. A rehabilitation of music at the expense of painting appears, in Van Steenwijck's view, to be the only way to rescue the latter: the impermanent aspect of the music and the fact that it does not provide a panoramic view become the parameters of a painting which, through a revised *paragone*, provides an answer to the issue of images. The only way to restore the affective charge of an optical, perspective space, without diminishing its spatial effect, is through the manipulation of light, which is deployed strategically in such a way that certain things become visible and others not. Gilles Deleuze expressed it even more effectively: 'Chiaroscuro nevertheless conceals as much as it makes visible, which is to say that it is so much the first instant of the visible, that it is in their very disappearance that things appear ... What we have here is an appearance that merges with the actual disappearance of things ... they have only a disappearance; they disappear before they have appeared, that is the wonder; to put it literally, I would say that they are already no longer there, but they were not even there in the first place. Before they were there, they are already no longer there. What is that? That is in fact chiaroscuro ... that which will define things, namely the outline. The one [chiaroscuro] drowns the other [the outline], and yet is also its dawn, it is like the announcement of the outline. A vague outline appears and disappears, according to the degree of the chiaroscuro ... Whatever the case, what is this merging of an appearing and disappearing outline? It is nature, or rather the spirit of nature. And through the disappearance of outlines, the objects, things, are reunited in the same nature.'[81]

What the painter does by transforming the altarpieces, decorations and the interior as a whole into a night chapel in a dark church is precisely the condition for the performance of polyphony. The ceaseless dying at one or other *tempo armonico*, precisely at the moment the sound is born is precisely what imbues the space with a constant, shifting play of contrast. What Leonardo still viewed as a shortfall becomes a surplus with a growing spatial awareness. The condition of perception is not appearance but movement of disappearance. And when Deleuze speaks of the same nature, which reunites all things in the disappearance of outlines, it is not difficult to detect the same function of light/colour and sound underlying it. The presence of singers legitimises in this sense the darkening of the chapel.

In 1521, Dürer used acoustic, musical parameters to describe the space of Antwerp cathedral. Around 40 years later, music itself would be identified using spatial parameters for the first time by the Venetian music theorists Zarlino and Vicentino. Venice was not only an important and early centre of pictorial tenebrism, but also the place where Adriaan Willaert was the first to develop the spatial technique of the *chori spezzati* – spatial polyphony performed by two or more alternating choirs. The stripping of churches had crucial consequences for visual and auditory perception. Reference was made for the first time to *cantare da chiesa* rather than the spatially more intimate *cantare da camera*.[82] A musical composition could best be represented, in Zarlino's view, using a spatial object, as we see in a diagram dating from 1588 (fig. 13).[83] The two poles of a two-choir composition relate to one another in this sense in the same way as zones of light and shade moving in and out of one another, creating harmony and dissonance at the same moment that they disappear.

Fig. 13
Gioseffo Zarlino, *Diagram from Sopplimenti musicali*, vol. 3, Venice, 1588, p. 57, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

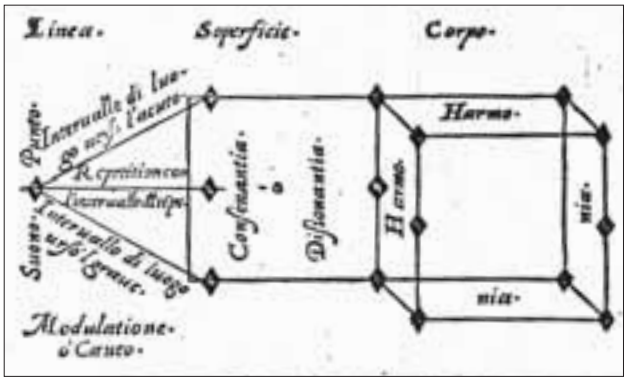

Fig. 14
Wolf Avemann, *Night Chapel with Singers*, oil on panel, 42 × 55 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. 5562

Wolf Avemann – a little-known pupil of Van Steenwijck from the Frankfurt studio – painted a night chapel with singers in imitation of his master, which has the air of a vision (fig.14).[84] Rather than placing a single formation of singers in the chapel, as Van Steenwijck did, Avemann surrounds the core group with extra singers reading from partbooks or perhaps performing an alternating monody. Avemann also added several trombones and a tenor pommer. The large group of musicians form concentric circles, as it were, around the choirbook. There are worshippers all around – most in semi-darkness, others conspicuously illuminated by candles. The night service – Fusenig suggests that it is a Christmas Mass, although the arrangement points more towards Vespers, which was also performed by Lutherans – is not limited to the chapel.[85] Avemann opens up the architecture of Van Steenwijck's nave in an ingenious way, splitting the zone on the right into an ambulatory with swallow's nest organ and a view of the choir screen, on which singers would also traditionally position themselves during services in the choir. A second formation of singers is made visible there by candlelight.

Avemann appears here to be less the heir to perspective views à la Vredeman de Vries and more the precursor of German Expressionism. Perhaps we ought to view the wild and inaccurate character of the perspective and the vehemence exuded by the work as the ultimate consequence of darkening the space: there is no longer any question of a perspective space full of ornamental decoration. The stripped, emptied space has been subordinated to an ornamentation of light and shade, which seizes, alters and affectively charges the architecture itself. The ultimate consequence of an (emptied) space that is now visible in its totality is the introduction of degrees of light and shade that manipulate and cloud the gaze.

Epilogue

Certain works show church interiors without figures (Grimmer, fig. 15 and cat. 42) or that are even entirely empty (see cat. 14, which has been attributed to Van Steenwijck).[86] If we had discussed these works at the beginning of this essay, it would not have been easy to demonstrate that this emptiness was intentional, that an absence can be affirmative, and that the empty works of Grimmer or Van Steenwijck are not simply preliminary studies or decorative paintings. These depicted spaces, which seem so familiar to us today, were produced in the sixteenth century and cannot be conceived as an affective reality without the inaugural act of iconoclasm. An empty, stripped, monochrome or even wrecked church in which the figures hesitantly seek or lay claim to a place once again might have impressed primarily because of the response they offered to a traumatic reality. Can we imagine that the viewer faced by an empty church by Van Steenwijck was emotionally affected to the same degree as by a painting by Rubens? The empty space is not only a mnemonic, commemorative space, it also fulfils exegetical functions. These works operated within a specific sociocultural and familial *terrain vague*, with actors from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Perhaps we ought not to over-interpret the *lectio spiritualis* these works set out to achieve and to associate them instead with the 'viewing pleasure' mentioned at the beginning of this essay, but then in the active, 'meaning-weaving' sense that Roland Barthes once described.[87] The 'perspective' was also in this sense always a *retrospective*, which helped actively to process the post-iconoclastic situation and conflict over images. Van Steenwijck's Lutheran background might have encouraged him to place singers at the centre of his work. According to Luther, an empty space is the degree zero of musicality: air is the most fundamental form of sound and, in that sense, always inherently animating; every space is sensitive space. Perhaps Van Steenwijck was also well placed as a Lutheran to explore a cultural and religious *terrain vague*, between the Calvinist impasse of a stripped space, supposedly cleared of all false im-

Fig. 15
Abel Grimmer, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, oil on panel, 58 × 65 cm, private collection, United States

ages, and the Catholic *horror vacui*, favouring an endless accumulation of images. Is it so simple, however?

The visual strategies applied by Grimmer and Van Steenwijck return as mystical instruments among the Carmelites, for example, who had an enormous spiritual influence in Antwerp in the seventeenth century, in the *emptying* or *evacuation* and the *ruin*; the inaudible or *silent music; the dark night*. Yet these ideas were also known already from medieval German mysticism, and were equally likely to be recovered in Lutheran circles and by the likes of Jakob Böhme.[88]

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NOTES

1 'The Pleasure of the Image' is the title of a 1985 essay on Dutch painted church interiors, in which Susan Sontag focuses on viewing pleasure in what she calls 'indisputably minor paintings'.

2 Maillet 2012, for instance, does not include singers at a choirbook among its examples of staffage.

3 The work is in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. See Jantzen 1910 (1979), pp. 13–16.

4 Harbison 1993. See also Harbison 2012, pp. 185–229.

5 For the *machina memorialis* concept, see Carruthers 1998, pp. 7–10. Did the panel offer those who stayed at home the opportunity to make a mental pilgrimage, as Harbison claims, a mnemonic machine of a concrete, mystical experience on the part of the patron? Or ought we to think rather of a diagrammatic function, in which the panel offers the instruments needed to bring about a *lectio spiritualis*?

6 He renders these components in colour: the singers, the living Madonna and the divine intervention – the cross above the parclose and the glass in the windows on the north side, which allow the divine light to enter.

7 Paul Fierens wrote trenchantly regarding the Berlin Madonna as early as 1941: 'La statue cependant commence à s'animer; elle se détache de sa niche, circule timidement sur les dalles où, derrière elle, glissent les rayons du soleil, filtrés par les vitraux de la cathédrale solidement construit. Elle fait un pas vers la vie, mais ce pas la révèel déesse, "empérière des infernaux palus", Dame du Ciel.' Fierens 1941, p. 10; also quoted in Purtle 1982, p. 152.

8 The motivation for someone in the nineteenth century to steal a fifteenth-century frame containing incantations is worth exploring elsewhere.

9 The original frame contained the words *FLOS FLORRIOLORUM APPELARIS* at the bottom and *MATER HEC EST FILIA/PATER HIC EST NATUS/QUIS AUDIVIT TALIA/DEUS HOMO NATUS ETCET* at the top. The final word, 'etcetera', shows that the text was not placed on the frame for emblematic so much as performative reasons and suggests the singing of a hymn. Millard Meiss pointed out that the quotation comes from the second verse of the hymn *Dies est laetitiae*. The Master of 1499 replaced the different incantations with the *incipit* from the famous Marian hymn *Salve Regina*. See Meiss 1945, pp. 179–80, and Purtle 1982, p. 149.

10 Hadewijch 1980, p. 280. Recent research on space in Hadewijch can be found in Daroczi 2007.

11 Beatrijs van Nazareth 1926, p. 37.

12 Stoichita 2008, pp. 44–5.

13 The *Madonna in a Church* does indeed seem to be Van Eyck's attempt to unite architecture, sculpture and music through painterly representation. Van Eyck's contribution to the *paragone* debate consists not of painting a lifelike *trompe-l'œil*, but of transforming its dynamism and animation to the physical borderline and the process of painting itself.

14 Quoted in Baxandall 1971, pp. 51–2.

15 For the grisaille as matter *in potentia*, see Didi-Huberman 2013, p. 284.

16 The frame extracts the life-giving *pneuma* from the representation and suggests that this is merely a depiction (or a souvenir?) of a magical transformation; yet it functions simultaneously as a performative diagram (*ETCET*) capable of activating the *machina memorialis*.

17 We will continue the discussion later of how depictions can guide a *lectio spiritualis* or lead towards a performative exegesis.

18 '… ignem, radios, tonitrua, fulgetra, fulgura, vel nebulas, ut aiunt, in pariete, sensus, affectus omnes, denique totum hominis animum in habitu corporis relucentem, ac pene vocem ipsam.' Erasmus, *Dialogus de recta Latini Graecique sermonis pronuntiatione*, quoted in Panofsky 1969, p. 225, and in Damisch 1972, p. 180.

19 See Sloterdijk 2011, pp. 29–45.

20 'Unser Frauen Kirche zu Antwerpen ist überaus gross, so dass man viele Messen auf einmal darin singt, ohne dass eine die andere stört. Ihre Altäre haben kostbare Stiftungen, dabei sind die besten Musiker angestellt, die man haben kann. Die Kirche hat viel andächtigen Gottesdienst, viel Steinwerk und insbesondere einen hübschen Turm.' Quoted in Gerd Unverfehrt, *Da sah ich viel köstliche Dinge. Albrecht Dürers Reise in die Niederlande*, Göttingen 2007. For an English translation see Dürer 2010, p. 31.

21 See Smith 2004, p. 72.

22 In his *Underweysung der Messung*, Dürer uses the movement of the snail, spider and serpent – which squirm their way forwards – to design complex dividers. See Bernard Cache, 'William Hogarth's Serpentine Line', in Eiroa and Sprecher 2013. See also Pack 1996.

23 This would also explain the affective relationship with perspective, which simultaneously naturalises it. The iconoclastic act is, in turn, anything but a modern or rationally motivated gesture; it mostly assumes magical and ritualistic forms instead. See Michalski 1993, also Latour 1998.

24 I am grateful to Bert Timmermans who drew my attention to the importance of these engravings for the argument of this essay. The engravings are reproduced in a number of places, including Göttler 1996, pp. 176–7.

25 The pseudo-Romanesque or Renaissance-style space *à l'antique* resonated with the Reformed Church as *ecclesia vetus* (old church) in the title.

26 The two terms were used in Jantzen's 1910 book as fundamental characteristics of the Gothic space. The Gothic space only became visible in retrospect, however, at the height of the Baroque period, through perspective; and it is this optical perception of the Gothic that has determined what are supposedly the basic parameters of the style.

27 The fact that this geometrical representation with its diagrammatic character really did need a physical reality is demonstrated by the difference in urbanist vision in Antwerp during the Calvinist republic and later under the restored Spanish Catholic regime. The former preferred straight streets, transparent views and short-cuts wherever monasteries or other buildings hindered this strict linearity. 'Modern' town planning of this kind was scaled back again after 1585. See Timmermans 2008, pp. 91–101, and Lombaerde 2001.

28 The engraving also shows at least two formations with singers and an organ in the nave.

29 Jonckheere 2012, p. 23.

30 Organs and, to a lesser extent, singers at a choirbook, appear frequently in the interior views by Van Steenwijck, Grimmer and Neeffs. No specific study has been devoted to the representation of the organ. For the situation in the Netherlands with a brief reference to the organ in Neeffs, see Keyl 1986.

31 Van Benthem 1994.

32 'Oock hebben sy gansch bedorven ende te niet gedaen de schoon sanckboecken ende andere boecken, de Kerck aangaende, ende menich hondert gulden weert synde, met noch drie schoon orgelen, ende de kinders liepen met de pypen al blasende achter straten, die sy malcanderen om spellen vercochten.' *Antwerps Cronykje*, vol. 1, p. 89. Perhaps this also explains how Plantin came by the choirbooks.

33 See Howarth 2009. The work is catalogued under the following numbers: Maillet 2012, M-1190, Howarth 2009, I.33. Because of the doubtful and uncertain attributions, we do not distinguish in this essay between the works of the elder and younger Van Steenwijcks, although the work in Hamburg is almost definitely attributable to the father. The works featuring the night chapel, which will be discussed in due course, might have been Van Steenwijck senior's invention. It is not clear when the son's hand began to appear in earnest.

34 *Encomium musices*, collection of engravings published by Philips Galle, c.1589–90. This corresponds with a date (1593) found on an almost identical Van Steenwijck (Maillet 2012, M-1189, Howarth 2009, I.17), now in a private collection in Paris.

35 Martin Luther, *Encomium musices*, 1538, in Leaver 2007, pp. 313–24, Appendix 3.

36 Leaver 2007, p. 314

37 The term is a classic description by Aby Warburg of what moves in a Renaissance painting to suggest the presence of wind, for instance.

38 See Didi-Huberman 2002, pp. 249–70.

39 Although the depicted practices are frequently associated with the Seven Sacraments, Van Steenwijck seems indebted more to the pictorial strategy of Van Eyck than that of Rogier van der Weyden.

40 Various other works by Van Steenwijck and Grimmer highlight the absence of a baby even more clearly.

41 The Van Steenwijck (or Grimmer) in the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna (Howarth 2009, I.73, Maillet 2012, M-0429) indisputably depicts a churching of this kind: a group of women enter the church via the north entrance; they are awaited by two priests and a group of men, probably including the husband. The altarpiece shows the appropriate theme of the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple with Simeon* – also known as the *Purification of Mary*.

42 See Kreitzer 2004, pp. 65–77. See also the important chapter on churching in Karant-Nunn 1997, pp. 71–88.

43 We also have in mind Luther's commentary and critique of rebaptism in the context of Anabaptism and the significance of the so-called first baptism. See 'Concerning Rebaptism' (1528) in Lull and Russell 2012. The Virgin Mary was frequently invoked as *nympha*, see the motet *O Rex Fridrice* by Johannes Brassart, with its invocation: *Nos, nympha pia, exaudi!* in Saucier 2006, p. 143.

44 'Hic tandem gustare cum stupore licet (sed non comprehendere) absolutam et perfectam sapientiam Dei in opere suo mirabili Musicae, in quo genere hoc excellit, quod una et eadem voce canitur suo tenore pergente, pluribus interim vocibus circum circa mirabiliter ludentibus, exulantibus et iuncundissimis gestibus laudem ornantibus, et velut iuxta eam divinam quandam choream ducentibus, ut iis, qui saltem modico afficiunter, nihil morabilius hoc saeculo exstare videatur.' Leaver 2007, pp. 323–4. The English translation is on p. 318.

45 Harris 2011, pp. 60–1.

46 Baisier 2008, pp. 25–33.

47 Stoichita 2008, pp. 32–5. Stoichita linked the singers with the animation of Adam, whose foot already seems halfway out of the frame.

48 For living statues in the sixteenth-century Antwerp context, see Caecilie Weissert, 'The Annexation of the Antique: The Topic of the Living Picture in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp', in Ramakers 2011, pp. 53–67.

49 Baisier 2008, p. 21.

50 *The terminus post quem* in question is 1587 and revises the date of 1580 or 1581 that Thomas Hensel proposed based on the painting's supposedly pro-iconoclastic content. See Hensel 1998, pp. 33–56.

51 See Guido Marnef, 'Protestant Conversions in an Age of Catholic Reformation: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Antwerp', in Gelderblom, De Jong and Van Vaeck 2004, pp. 41–2.

52 This is an example of the interior view or perspective as 'retrospective'.

53 The symbolic use of grisaille by perspective painters is evident from, for instance, the quotation from Bruegel's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery,* in which the 'casting of stones' is the central focus, transposed to a church interior in which the figures, unlike those in Bruegel, are represented in colour, while the grisaille is used for the whole of the stripped church interior. Jonckheere 2012 (p. 12) links Bruegel's grisaille with iconoclasm and cites a work by Neeffs in this context. Grimmer had already painted the same scene in a church interior, which seems to have been inspired by St Walburga's Church in Antwerp (Howarth 2009, I.68 and Maillet 2012, M-0442), as did Paul Juvenel from the Netherlands (Maillet 2012, E-2160) in the early seventeenth century, who actually borrowed Bruegel's entire *mise-en-scène*.

54 Prévost 2011, p. 58.

55 See Hensel 1998, p. 43. Hensel identified the theme of this altarpiece and also noted the presence of two Santiago pilgrims.

56 This is also suggested by the three static figures in the foreground, of whom the one on the right points towards the south bay.

57 Two virtually identical versions are known: Maillet 2012, M-0445 in the Museo Correale di Terranovo in Sorrento and Maillet 2012, M-0430 in a private collection. We refer here primarily to the version from the private collection.

58 The depiction of singers viewed from behind at a choirbook in a church interior is fairly unusual. Painters mostly used the physical gestures and facial movements of the singers to add to the expressiveness of the image. Singers singing at a choirbook were a favourite subject for cartoons until the nineteenth century – a tradition dating back to the fire and brimstone rhetoric of the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot Aelred van Rievaulx, who considered the poses adopted by singers at a choirbook to be unseemly. A miniature by Marcello Fogolino in the Museo Carrara in Bergamo shows a choir from the rear, but the artist alleviates the anonymity of the singers by having one of them turn his head round towards the viewer.

59 For the Bruegelian legacy of the anonymous figures, see Christopher P. Heuer, 'Nobody's Bruegel', and Bertrand Prévost, 'Visage-paysage. Problème de peinture', both in Melion, Rothstein and Weemans 2014, pp. 403–20 and pp. 379–99. An iconoclastic association with anonymity is discussed in Heuer 2009, pp. 14–16.

60 A biography of Grimmer and the comparison with the rest of his work can be found in Bertier de Sauvigny 1991.

61 Howarth 2009, p. 47.

62 Jonckheere 2012, pp. 142–9. Luther too, for instance, used the nickname Junker Jörg, alluding to St George.

63 The Van Steenwijck in Budapest shows that there was an altarpiece at this same pier showing the Conversion of St Paul – an experience that was visual for Paul himself but purely aural for his fellow travellers. See Baisier 2008, p. 25.

64 The fact that these altarpieces have been worked out in a reasonable amount of detail contrasts with the abstraction of the staffage, suggesting that this contrast is deliberate; it renders the anonymity of the figures even more tangible.

65 The reference can be read in John's Gospel, Chapter 21.

66 Klaus Krüger, 'Mute Mysteries of the Divine Logos: On the Pictorial Poetics of Incarnation', in Melion and Wandel 2015, pp. 76–108.

67 Baert 2016.

68 See Matthew 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25.

69 Bader 1996, p. 185.

70 See Howarth 2009, p. 112. The reference for this work is: Howarth 2009, I.30 and Maillet 2012, M-1256.

71 Howarth 2009, p. 112.

72 As was the case with the Van Steenwijck family, we do not intend to explore here the different attributions to members of the Neeffs family.

73 Thanks to Claire Baisier for this suggestion.

74 See the essay by Ursula Härting on pp. 22–37. For the concept of re-territorialisation in the seventeenth-century Antwerp context, see Bert Timmermans, 'Mapping the role of commemorative space in processes of (re)territorialization. Elite families and spatialities of enclosure in Counter-Reformation Antwerp', in Van Bueren, Cockerham, Horch, Meuwese and Schilp forthcoming (2016).

75 These might be evening or night-time services, such as Vespers or Benediction; although early-morning Masses, held before dawn are also possible. We occasionally glimpse the first rays of the sun in the east through an open door in one of his paintings. Neeffs makes a single exception in his depiction of singers at night: the 1648 work in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, with staffage by Bonaventura Peeters, shows singers preparing for a procession.

76 Howarth 2009, p. 255: HENRI VAN/STEINWICK/INVENTOR/1591 and HENRI VAN/STEINWICK/FECIT/1624. Fusenig 2004, p. 140.

77 Fusenig 2004, p. 145.

78 See Jonckheere 2012, p. 213 regarding the ambiguity of the use of candles in the post-iconoclastic period. This ambiguity is only heightened in this type of night scene, as it is not clear whether the candles have been placed as tokens of worship or as light sources. Candles are, however, obviously needed in order to see inside a darkened church.

79 This specific capacity of music had been a rhetorical cliché since the end of the fifteenth century: see Van Damme 2008, p. 166, and Winternitz 1982, pp. 219–21.

80 Richter 1949, p. 74. The Italian original reads, in full: 'La musica non è da essere chiamata altro che sorella della pittura, conciossiaché essa è subietto dell'udito, secondo senso all'occhio, e compone armonia con la congiunzione delle sue parti proporzionali operate nel medesimo tempo, costrette a nascere e morire in uno o piú tempi armonici, i quali tempi circondano la proporzionalità de' membri di che tale armonia si compone, non altrimenti che faccia la linea circonferenziale per le membra di che si genera la bellezza umana. Ma la pittura eccelle e signoreggia la musica perché essa non muore immediate dopo la sua creazione, come fa la sventurata musica, anzi, resta in essere, e ti si dimostra in vita quel che in fatto è una sola superficie. O maravigliosa scienza, tu riservi in vita le caduche bellezze de' mortali, le quali hanno piú permanenza che le opere di natura, le quali al continuo sono variate dal tempo, che le conduce alla debita vecchiezza.'

81 Lecture given by Gilles Deleuze on 19 April 1983. The original French text can be found at: http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=238 (accessed 23 April 2016).

82 Schiltz 2003, pp. 64–78.

83 Illustration and explanation in Van Damme 2008, p. 170.

84 The work is in the reserve collection of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. Its reference is Howarth 2009, I.75 and Maillet 2012, M-0058.

85 Thomas Fusenig, 'Ein Kircheninterieur von Wolfgang Avemann (1583-um 1620) in Dresden: Hauptwerk eines vergessenen hessischen Architekturmalers', in *Dresdener Kunstblätter*, 50, 4, 2006. The author is sincerely grateful to Thomas Fusenig for allowing access to his material on this work by Wolf Avemann.

86 The setting and monochrome of the church interior recall Van Eyck's *Madonna in a Church*, without singers but with an organ. The absence of human figures means that a polychrome statue of St Sebastian suddenly assumes all the animating qualities of a living image; the same goes for the Resurrection image in colour above the stone tomb. Grimmer painted several works based on the setting, and it would be interesting to study their virtual *espace de résonance*. The attribution of the empty church seen in cat. 14 to Van Steenwyck is based on the auction of 2010. For a different interpretation see the catalogue entry on p. 82.

87 Roland Barthes 1973. Productive text interpretation and pleasure go hand in hand in Barthes.

88 See Certeau 1982.

Catalogue

Divine Interiors

Architectural painting in Antwerp

Cat. 1

Philips Galle, after a design by Pieter Bruegel I, published by Hieronymus Cock

Faith, from the series of *The Seven Virtues*, 1558

Engraving, first state of two, 22.5 × 29.5 cm (plate border)

Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp, inv. MMB.1094

LITERATURE

Antwerp 2012, pp. 126, 130.

Cat. 2

Frans Hogenberg (studio)

The Iconoclastic Fury, 1579

Etching, 21 × 28.3 cm (plate border)

University of Antwerp Library, Special Collections, Print Room, inv. tg:uapr:923
Reproduction: Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp

LITERATURE

Voges 2016, pp. 121–40.

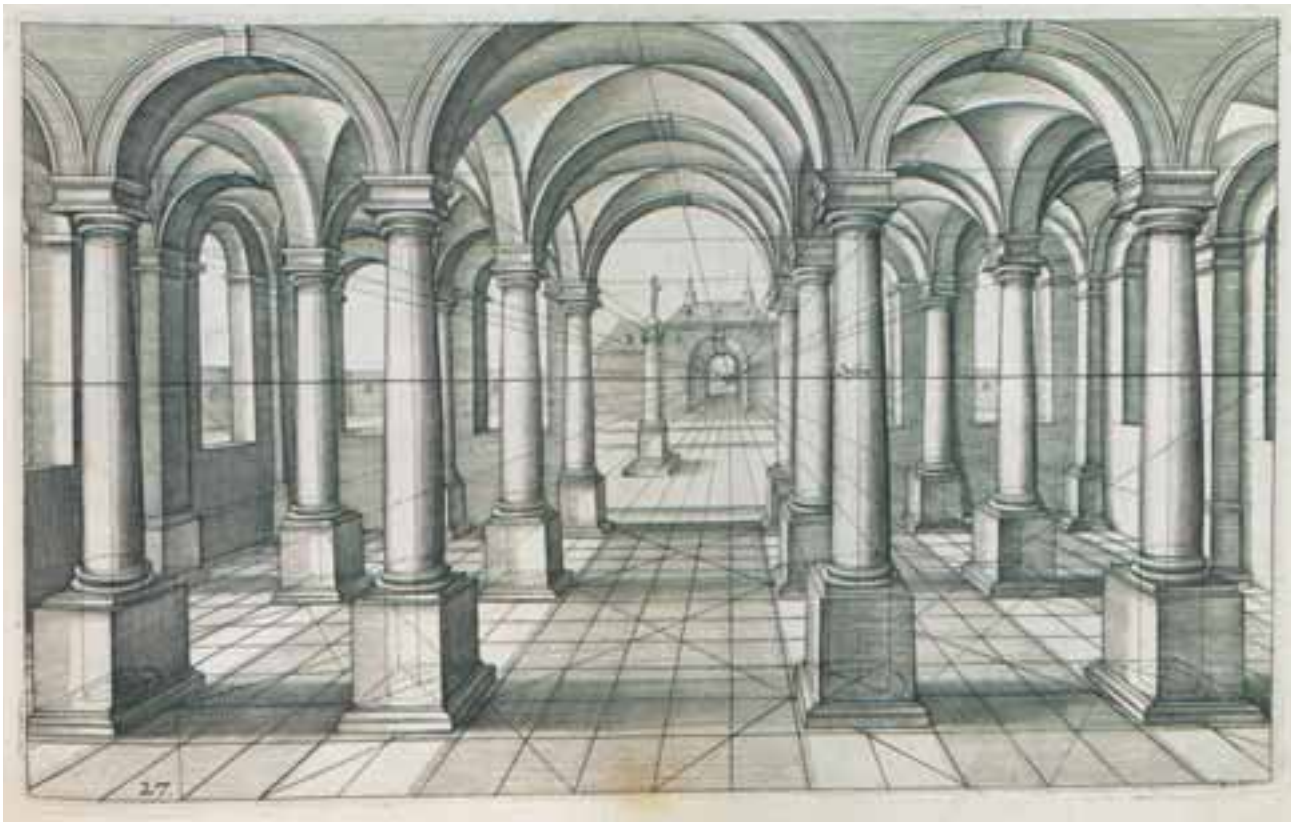
Cat. 3

Hans Vredeman de Vries

Perspective, Leiden, The Hague, 1604–5

Title page part two

University Library of Leuven, old print, 7C75
Reproduction: Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp



Cat. 4

Hans Vredeman de Vries

Perspective, Leiden, The Hague, 1639

Perspective drawing

Hendrik Conscience Heritage Library, Antwerp, old print, G 5058
Reproduction: Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp

Cat. 5

Hans Vredeman de Vries

Interior of a Gothic Church, 1594

Oil on panel, 24.5 × 40 cm, signed and dated 'H. Vries 1594/AETA./67/AN'

Private collection, Germany, courtesy of Frye & Sohn, Münster

PROVENANCE

On the back of the panel is a red wax seal of a hitherto unidentified princely collection, with the abbreviation 'V(on)G(ottes)G(naden)IFPHZSETVV'.

LITERATURE

Briels 1997, p. 124, fig. 185; Antwerp, Cologne and Vienna, 1992, pp. 300–1, no. 144; Lemgo and Antwerp, 2002, cat. 164 (H. Borggrefe); Fusenig 2003 (2006), pp. 93–101, p. 94, fig. 2; Maillet 2012, M-1674.

Vredeman de Vries painted this interior of a Gothic church with a side aisle and a baptismal font during his time in Gdańsk. He lived and worked there from 1592 onwards, initially as an expert on fortress construction and later as a painter, before following his son Paul to the court of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague in 1596. The Protestant city republic on the Vistula estuary engaged in brisk trade with the Netherlands. The painting is the earliest known Gothic church interior by Hans Vredeman de Vries; previously he had evidently painted only temple-like structures with antique forms. A companion piece of the same size depicting a Renaissance interior was also executed in Gdańsk.[1] In the town hall of Gdańsk's New Town, Vredeman and his son together painted an *Allegory of Piety* featuring a Gothic church interior surrounded by allegorical and biblical figures.[2] Vredeman's pupil Hendrick Aerts, who received his training in Gdańsk, executed a painting of an empty church similar to this panel from a private collection.[3]

Vredeman's two small-scale views are conspicuously empty, 'cleansed' of altars. The reason for this may have been that the paintings were to be furnished with figures (and altars?) by a staffage specialist. Another possibility is that the two works were intended as 'models' for a larger commission. If so, they may represent a critical stance with regard to the wealth of imagery in Catholic churches. At the end of his life, Vredeman (and his son) published *Perspective*, which contains a similar composition (sheet NN – *Templum introspicientibus modernum*). In that work, the staffage of a Gothic church consists of a figure resembling Luther being chased out of the building by a bishop and a clergyman as Christ looks on from behind a column. A painting of unknown whereabouts, presumably attributable to Hans Vredeman de Vries, is devoted to the same theme.[4] The question of whether the panel under discussion here also carries such a meaning must remain unanswered.

Thomas Fusenig

NOTES

1 Oil on panel, 25 × 40 cm; Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 163; Dorotheum, Vienna, 31 March 2009, lot 213.

2 Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, cat. 168a–g; Fusenig 2003 (2006), pp. 93–4, fig. 1.

3 Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Brunswick, inv. 425; Vermet 1996, pp. 27–57, p. 46, fig. 15; Maillet 2012, M-0001.

4 Artcurial: Briest-Poulain – F. Tajan, Paris, 24 June 2008, lot 39, attributed to a follower of Peeter Neeffs.

Cat. 6

Hendrik van Steenwijck I

Gothic Church with Christening Procession, 1586

Oil on panel, 31.5 × 47 cm, signed and dated at the centre below, 'Henrick VAN.STeNWYCK 1.5.86'. Motto 'TECUM HABITA' above the depiction of a snail on the base of the pier to the far left and followed by the initials 'I.M.' on the floor beneath

Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels, inv. 6683

PROVENANCE

Possibly Johannes Moflin (died 1587), Sint Winoksbergen (Bergues); possibly William Wilkins R.A. London; Christie's, 7 April 1838, lot 118; J.F. Barham; marked as subsequently in the possession of Higginson; Higginson (possibly his auctions in 1846); Hoogendijk, Amsterdam, 1936; possibly Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, October 1952, lot 431; acquired by the museum from Galerie Arthur de Heuvel, Brussels, 1953.

LITERATURE

Jantzen 1910 (1979), p. 234, no. 430a; Řezníčkovi 1964, p. 133; Von der Osten and Vey 1969, p. 336 (ill. 300); Pauwels 1984, pp. 284–5; Wright 1992, vol. I, p. 285; Van Mander 1994–99, vol. 4, ill. 164; Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, p. 163; Howarth 2009, I.12., p. 108 (ill. p. 388).

This painting, made in 1586, shows the clear structure and detailed three-dimensionality that characterise the work of Hendrik van Steenwijck I, one of the earliest specialist painters of church interiors. Although fairly small, the format is relatively large for Van Steenwijck, as he often painted his interiors on copper on a very small scale and in a miniaturist style that featured the finest of lines and minute detail.

Apart from the early and explicit dating, this work is particularly special because of the identifiable motto TECUM HABITA followed by the initials I.M. in combination with a snail motif to the lower left. This may be a reference to the client and it might also help to identify the church interior. Thomas Fusenig discovered that the source of the motto lay with the Roman author Persius (*Satires*, Book IV, verse 52): *tecum habita: noris quam sit tibi curta supellex* ('live with yourself: realise how poorly furnished you are') – which, of course, is also a reference to the snail that carries its humble home on its own back. He also came across the same ingenious and typically humanist combination of word and image in the contribution made by Johannes Moflin (before 1573) to the *Liber Amicorum*, produced by the famous Antwerp cartographer Abraham Ortelius.[1] In his celebrated atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Ortelius in turn dedicated to Moflin in the spirit of friendship a map that showed the life and peregrinations of the biblical patriarch Abraham. It was made in 1586[2] – the year Van Steenwijck left Antwerp for Frankfurt am Main[3] and the date of the present painting. It cannot be entirely discounted that Moflin commissioned the painting to give to his friend Ortelius in exchange for the print assignment.[4] Moreover, because of the vow of poverty he had taken as a Benedictine monk, Moflin would have been expected to be as poorly furnished as the proverbial snail.

In 1586, Johannes Moflin was abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of St Winnoc – now in the small town of Bergues in northern France, but in Van Steenwijck's time part of the Spanish Netherlands that had been won back from the Protestants in 1583. Several authors have noted the similarities between this painting and the interior of St Peter's Church (Sint-Pieterskerk) in Leuven, while others have pointed to similarities with Antwerp's cathedral.[5] However, there are certain anomalies: for example, in St Peter's Church the columns ascend without capitals into the ogee arches. In Howarth's view, the painting was simply a highly imaginative combination of interiors on Van Steenwijck's part. Nevertheless, we are left wondering whether this is not in fact meant to represent a monastery church, given that next to the motto on the far left we can see a passage leading to what looks like a monastery cloister, which would not be relevant to either the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp or to St Peter's Church in Leuven. So we should not wholly discount the possibility that the church represented here was the (alas, poorly documented)[6] Benedictine Abbey of St Winnoc, where Moflin was abbot and which was destroyed during the French Revolution.

Joost Vander Auwera

NOTES

1 Folio 48 of *Liber Amicorum*. See Lemgo and Antwerp 2002, p. 264 (ill. p. 266). Howarth 2009 (I.10, I.12, I. 34 and I. 45) catalogues various other paintings by or in the manner of Hendrick van Steenwijck I with this motto, the snail motif and the initials I.M. He also mentions some alternative interpretations for this: in cat. I.45, p. 117, he outlines the suggestion given in Daniëls 1977 that the initials are those of Jan Moretus of Antwerp or of Johann Meerman of Cologne, or even an abbreviation of Jesus and Mary; in cat. I.10, p. 107, Howarth mentions the hypothesis put forward in Řezníčkovi 1964, p. 133, that the motto can be expanded to become '*tecum habita patientia Christi*', which was the device used by Nicolaas Nomius (1581–1626). The fact that the full combination of motto, snail *and* Moflin's name appears in Abraham Ortelius's *Album Amicorum* would seem to me to be a strong argument in favour of identifying Moflin as the client for the painting in question.

2 Letter from Thomas Fusenig to the author in the Brussels museum dossier dated 15 October 2002.

3 See Frans Baudouin, entry on Hendrik van Steenwijck I in Grove 1996, vol. 29, p. 592.

4 My letter of reply to Thomas Fusenig in the Brussels museum dossier dated 4 November 2002. A comparison can be made with the account given by Karel van Mander in his *Schilder-boeck* (Book on Painting) concerning a swap made between the artist Antonio Moro and the humanist Hubertus Goltzius: Goltzius's celebrated book about Roman coins was exchanged as a gift for his portrait by Moro, a portrait identified with a painting in Brussels, inv. 1253. See Martschke 1998, p. 278.

5 Regarding both options, see Howarth 2009, op. cit.

6 The present-day ruins encompass only a small part of the destroyed abbey, and the aerial view of the church provided by an engraving by Blockhuyse in Antonius Sanderus's *Flandria Illustrata*, Cologne, 1641–4, is not much more enlightening.

Cat. 7

Abel Grimmer

Church Interior with Several Figures

Oil on panel, 26 × 37.4 cm, signed and dated 'GRIM(..)ER FECIT 1588 and 158(..)'

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Galerie J. Kraus, Paris, 1976 (cat. 1976, no. 26); Christie's, London, 11 December 1984, lot 66 (colour ill.); Christie's, London, 4 July 1986, lot 33 (colour ill.); Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 14 November 1990, lot 32 (colour ill.).

LITERATURE

Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 242, cat. 91; Maillet 2012, p. 251, M-0440.

The year 1588 is visible on a tombstone – one of the earliest years to appear in a painting by Grimmer. It is not difficult to see that Grimmer modelled this work on Van Steenwijck's *Church Interior with Sermon*, one version of which was in the Galería Ana Chiclana, Madrid, from 2009 to 2013,[1] while another version is in the Royal Castle in Cracow.[2] Grimmer, however, eliminated the group of people and the sermon and moved the choir screen further back. Moreover, the position of the pillars on the right side was shifted so that fewer of them overlap. The composition was extended somewhat at the top and the nave was given a shallower vault. Several other undated, precise copies from his workshop prove that Grimmer knew the Van Steenwijck composition.[3] Closer inspection reveals that the windows in Grimmer's version are rendered incorrectly. A study of the underdrawing of the painting using infrared reflectography would provide information about the method Grimmer employed to transfer the composition to the panel.

Painters from Antwerp sometimes signed paintings they had produced two or three years before becoming free masters. Because Grimmer was not recorded in the *Liggeren* as a free master until 1592/3 the date is difficult to explain. There are certain problems in attempting to date paintings of architecture on the basis of dates that appear in church interiors – such as on tombstones, funerary hatchments, epitaphs – unless they are in the immediate vicinity of the signature. Such dates can, strictly speaking, only be used as a *terminus post quem*. In this respect, Grimmer's monogrammed *Temple of Jerusalem with the Healing of the Lame Man*, dated 1593, offers the most reliable impression of his early painting style, since the year is directly associated with his monogram. Abel Grimmer, who was active in his father's workshop or continued to operate it after his father's death, may have ignored the rule not to sign a work before becoming a free master. Conditions at the painters' guild had surely not yet been entirely restored after the re-conquest of Antwerp by Alessandro Farnese in 1585. Even if the year

on the tombstone does not offer a secure date, nothing argues against it being an early work by Grimmer.

Thomas Fusenig and Ulrich Heinen

NOTES

1 Howarth 2009, I.81; Maillet 2012, M-1188.

2 Howarth 2009, I.74; Maillet 2012, M-1187.

3 Maillet 2012, M-0447 and M-448.

Cat. 8

Abel Grimmer

Church Interior with Choir Screen and Numerous Figures at a Baptism, c. 1590

Oil on panel, 49 × 66 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Nagyházi, Budapest, 15 May 2007, lot 81.

LITERATURE

Howarth 2009, I.84 (wrongly attributed to Hendrik van Steenwijck); Maillet 2012, M-0423.

Another version of the composition by Grimmer bears the date 1590 on a tomb slab.[1] There are also larger versions of this composition with fewer figures.[2] Grimmer's staffage figures, which are clearly largely by his own hand or added by his workshop, have strongly modelled faces and are, as a rule, broader and stiffer than the figures of Van Steenwijck I. In the present painting, the heads of several figures in the foreground speaking to a cleric are unusually lifelike in execution.

The overwhelming majority of Grimmer's church paintings can be identified as based on a work by Hendrick van Steenwijck I that Grimmer carefully copied or varied slightly. However, no direct model by Van Steenwijck has yet been identified for the present picture. The composition is essentially a mirror-reversal of a painting by Van Steenwijck I that was formerly in Trieste (see p. 13, fig. 1), and resembles his painting of Mechelen Cathedral in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels,[3] so it is reasonable to assume there was a model for this one as well. In terms of composition, it comes closest to a painting in the Národnígalerie in Prague, although it has not yet been confirmed whether this work is by Van Steenwijck himself.[4]

On the activities of churchgoers, auricular confessions, the receiving of holy water, children playing, and the clean surplice, see essay II pp. 22–37.

Thomas Fusenig and Ulrich Heinen

NOTES

1 Oil on panel 34 × 19.6 cm, signed 'ABEL GRIMER/ FECIT'; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, pp. 240–1, ill. 120, no. LXXXVI; Maillet 2012, M-0436; Sotheby's, New York, 11 June 1981, lot 3; Worcester 1983–4, cat. 16 (colour ill.); B. Palitz Collection, New York, 1982.

2 Two examples are a painting by an unknown master in the Bijlokemuseum, Ghent (103 × 149 cm: photo KIKIRPA, M206555) and another work attributed to Peeter Neeffs II, in Stoneacre, Kent (canvas, 83.8 × 105 cm; National Trust, NT 863928).

3 Howarth 2009, I.25; Maillet 2012, M-1198.

4 Maillet 2012, M-1203.

Cat. 9

Abel Grimmer

Church Interior with Choir Screen and Christening Party, c. 1590

Oil on panel, 35.3 × 46.2 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Drouot, Paris, Loudmer sale, 19 April 1971, lot 61; Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 5 November 2002, lot 251; Rafael Valls, 2003–4; Rafael Valls Gallery, London, 2009; private collection, UK; Floris van Wanroij Fine Art, Dommelen.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 251, M-0431.

Grimmer's church paintings can be recognised from his use of spatial set pieces drawn from a limited supply of pictorial inventions. The present picture refers to a composition by Hendrik van Steenwijck I of Antwerp Cathedral, which is known from a version dated 1590.[1] In Hamburg there is a careful copy of this composition, which, to judge from its bright colouration, is by Grimmer, even though it has so far been overwhelmingly regarded as a work by Van Steenwijck I.[2] Grimmer did a variation on the Hamburg composition in a painting signed and dated 1595, formerly in Blackwell Hall in Chesham.[3] In its spatial composition it is also related to a painting of a church by Van Steenwijck I in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Brunswick.[4] It is particularly notable that Grimmer added to his composition a group of figures in a baptismal procession that can be seen in Van Steenwijck's painting in Brussels (cat. 6).

The many references to paintings by Van Steenwijck demonstrate that Grimmer as a rule arrived at synthetic, generalising depictions of contemporary churches. The simple logic of Grimmer's use of a central vanishing point streamlined the spatial structure of his models, which were constructed taking distance points into account. Without constructing the intersection points of the vanishing lines with diagonals aimed at the distance point, he would not have been able to show the horizontal lines receding into depth in a consistent manner. When drawing pointed arches or vaults from below, Grimmer sometimes made obvious errors. Architectural details such as the capitals of circular pillars were sometimes executed without regard to the viewer's position. Grimmer's pictures sometimes resemble those of Van Steenwijck I in their monochrome colouration. In many cases, however, he chose stronger local colours for the church decorations and for the figures. A bole red often stands out in quite bright paintings. Whereas Van Steenwijck managed to suggest an atmospheric depth through his use of colour gradations and chiaroscuro, this illusion is lacking in most of Grimmer's paintings.

Baptismal processions are a common motif in paintings of churches. Baptism was the most essential of the sacraments – only a few Protestants believed otherwise[5] – so there were ready customers of both confessions for these paintings. Grimmer's work shows a line of women wearing clothing for church similar to that of a 'Damoiselle Flamende allant a Leglise' depicted by Lucas d'Heere (1534–84).[6] (fig. 1) Figures of the apostles and motifs from the cathedral allude to a Catholic baptism ceremony in Antwerp. Midwives who had been tested on and certified in the Catholic faith pressed to baptise the child on the day of the birth. Strictly in keeping with their office, they could themselves conduct baptism in extremis. This raises the question of who is carrying the baby and why neither the father nor a single male godfather, who would normally have been there, is taking part in the baptismal procession to the chapel.

Fig. 1
Lucas d'Heere, *Kostuum Boek*, 1534–84, University Library of Ghent, inv. BHSL.HS.3227

Thomas Fusenig, Ulrich Heinen and Ursula Härting

NOTES

1 Oil on canvas, 73.9 × 106.9 cm, signed and dated 'STEENWYCK 1590'; Ader-Tajan, Paris, 9 April 1990, lot 23; Howarth 2009, I.17; Maillet 2012, p. 376, M-1189.

2 Oil on canvas, 90 × 121 cm; Howarth 2009, I.33; Maillet 2012, M-1190.

3 Oil on panel, 42.2 × 57.8 cm, signed and dated 'ABEL/ GRIMER/ INVEN(it)/ ET/ FECIT/ 1595'; Sotheby's, London, 4 July 1990, no. 28 with colour. ill. (formerly Noortman & Brod); Legrand 1957, p. 165 (with reference to another copy dated 1606); Worcester 1983–4, fig. 16b; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, cat. IX, pp. 200–1; Vredeman de Vries 2002, p. 171, fig. 19; Maillet 2012, M-0425.

4 Inv. GK 98; Howarth 2009, II.B.148; Maillet 2012, M-1207.

5 Marinus 1995, pp. 222–4.

6 Ghent 2004, pl. 50, dated after 1576.

Cat. 10

Abel Grimmer

Perspective Drawing of an Imaginary Church Interior, c. 1580

Pen in brown and black ink with wash, 20.8 × 28.3 cm, watermark: Heussler, Basel, c. 1578 (very similar to Briquet 1364)[1]

Private collection, Antwerp, inv. D042

PROVENANCE

1990, Michel Ceuterick, Asper.

LITERATURE

Fusenig 2012.

Although the construction of linear perspective dated back to theories put forward by sixteenth-century Italian artists such as Sebastiano Serlio (1475–1554), in the Southern Netherlands these ideas only became widespread in the early seventeenth century, following the publication of *Perspective* (1604) by Hans Vredeman de Vries (see cat. 4). However, this did not prevent Antwerp's painters of interiors from employing such mathematical rules before that date. Depth in a composition was obtained by using a 'vanishing point', the point of intersection between different visual axes or sightlines. Perspective could be further elaborated by using lateral distance points located on either side of the same horizon line. This marks the greatest difference in the use of perspective as seen in works by Serlio and Vredeman de Vries. The latter placed his distance points within the picture, while the Italian master located them beyond it. The distance between the vanishing point and the horizon line is important, because it is this that determines the point from which the viewer can best observe depth in the work. Herein lies the problem with this drawing.

The name of Peeter Neeffs I was written on the reverse of the drawing in the past, an attribution that nowadays no longer seems tenable. Among other reasons for its rejection, one is the way the perspective has been created. The various sightlines meet at the vanishing point just above the choir rood loft. However, there are no vanishing points to be found within the picture despite the fact that Neeffs consistently took care to place them within his compositions, following the example set by Vredeman de Vries. Therefore, a more plausible attribution is to Abel Grimmer, who did not have full mastery over the construction of this type of perspective.

There was a gap of approximately two years between the death of Jacob Grimmer (c. 1520–c. 1588/90) and the enrolment of his son Abel in Antwerp's Guild of St Luke.[2] Some past writers believed that Abel then entered a brief apprenticeship at the studio of painter Hendrik van Steenwijck I (c. 1550–1603).[3] However, Steenwijck had fled to the German territories around 1586, which makes the hypothesis untenable. Nevertheless, it is agreed that Abel Grimmer must have been familiar with the elder Steenwijck's early work. On several occasions, Grimmer imitated or took inspiration from the master's interiors, albeit without the master's expertise in understanding how to render perspective.

This interior drawing of the seven-aisled church is an important addition to the very limited number of drawings among the works by Abel Grimmer.[4] Bearing similarities to paintings of church interiors by Hendrik van Steenwijck II and/or Grimmer's studio, it is presumed that this work relates to a copy produced by Abel after a composition by Hendrik Steenwijck I. As such, the drawing serves as a clear link to Grimmer's work as a copyist.

Maarten Bassens

NOTES

1 The lower section showing the letters is a mirror image of the upper section showing the eagle. See also Tschudin 1958, pp. 131, 163, no. 243.

2 Rombouts and Lerius 1864–76, vol. I: 1453–1615, p. 367.

3 Howarth 2009, pp. 87–8.

4 Reine de Bertier de Sauvigny mentions only six drawings in her catalogue raisonné of the artist. See Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, pp. 249–50, nos. 1–5.

Cat. 11

Hendrik van Steenwijck I

Hall Church

Oil on copper, 35.5 × 52 cm, signed on the column to the right 'HENDRICK VAN STEENWYK 1597'

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Gallery Rudolf Pelker Cologne; auctioned in Amsterdam, Frederik Muller, 26–7 May 1914; Galerie De Jonckheere, Paris, 2010. May be identical to the work from the Goldschmidt collection sold in 1907 in Frankfurt (Jantzen 1910 (1979), no. 480).

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 380, M-1213.

In this hall church a number of altarpieces can be seen, some with their wings open. There are, however, no liturgical acts being conducted and no clergyman is present. Apart from the figure kneeling in a side chapel on the left, the figures seem to have entered the church for a stroll. This may be a result of the painting having been produced in the Lutheran imperial city of Frankfurt am Main, to which Van Steenwijck immigrated with his family in 1586, after Alessandro Farnese had re-conquered Antwerp for King Philip II of Spain. The painting style can be compared to *Church Interior* in St Petersburg[1] or to a copper panel produced in 1596 whose whereabouts is unknown.[2]

Hendrik van Steenwijck I usually painted his small and medium-sized works (up to around 60 centimetres high) on wooden panels and his larger ones on canvas. He appears also to have painted some pictures up to 40 centimetres high on copper. His son, Hendrik van Steenwijck II, who was probably already working in his father's workshop in Frankfurt at the time this painting was made, later preferred to paint on copper. The present painting has a number of very fine lines; Hendrik II would later perfect this sort of 'draughtsmanlike' work.

Thomas Fusenig and Ulrich Heinen

NOTES

1 GE 1895; Maillet 2012, M-1216.

2 Howarth 2009, I.20; Maillet 2012, M-1215.

Cat. 12

Paul Vredeman de Vries and Sebastiaen Vrancx

Church Interior, 1613

Oil on panel, 69.5 × 103.5 cm, dated on a tombstone in the foreground: ANNO 1613

Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels, inv. 4487

PROVENANCE

Scottish noble family: Erskine? (according to the label on the reverse); Art Dealers Gooden & Fox (London) (according to the label on the reverse); acquired by the museum from C. Brunner, Paris, 1923.

LITERATURE

Philippot, 1994, p. 247; Grove 1996, vol. 29; Brussels 1994, cat. 16 (Vander Auwera), p. 53, colour ill. (as attributed to Peeter Neeffs I and Sebastiaen Vrancx); Brussels 2004, s.p. sub VI (as attributed to Paul Vredeman de Vries and Sebastiaen Vrancx); Maillet 2012, p. 457, M-1679.

This is a relatively rare example of the collaboration between Sebastiaen Vrancx and Paul Vredeman de Vries, son of the more famous Hans Vredeman de Vries and, just like his father, a specialist in architectural perspective. Rare but not wholly unique: a *Palace View* in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp[1] and a painting in Schloss Bückeburg signed by Paul Vredeman de Vries[2] can also be attributed stylistically to the same two hands. In both cases, the architecture was painted by Vredeman de Vries, the perspective specialist in the genre, while Vrancx added the figures. Infrared reflectography reveals a fixed grid of perspective lines with one common vanishing point, evidence that leads back to this disciplined architectural painter. Infrared technology, which reveals much more than can be seen with the naked eye, also allows us to see how the staffage was superimposed on an already complete architectural background.[3] Moreover, we can see that the furnishing of the church, with its altars and their ornamentation of paintings and sculptures, is not by the hand of Vredeman de Vries but by that of Vrancx. For example, the figures shown in paintings and sculptures at the altars display the schematised faces typical of Vrancx, with a few dots representing eyes and nose. What is more, this decoration corresponds in its picturesque details with the characteristics and style used for the staffage of ordinary figures. The same surprising distribution of labour in an architectural painting is seen again in a work dated 1616, barely three years later, in which Vrancx collaborated with Bartholomeus van Bassen. (cat. 32)

Joost Vander Auwera

NOTES

1 Inv. 936, oil on canvas, 69 × 102 cm, Antwerp and Lemgo 2002, cat. 211, pp. 367–8, colour ill., p. 369 (with further references and attribution to Paul Vredeman de Vries and Sebastiaen Vrancx).

2 Ibid, with reference to Lemgo 1989, vol. I, p. 127, colour plate 5, p. 171.

3 Infrared images by Freya Maes; discussed in Brussels 2004.

Cat. 13

Peeter Neeffs I ? and Simon Fokke

Interior of Bonn Minster, 1618

Pen in brown ink, pencil and brush in grey ink on paper, grey wash, lined, framing line in pen and black ink, 29 × 34.5 cm, signed and dated on the base of the first column to the left 'P. NEEFS / 1618'

Fondation Custodia, Paris, Collection Frits Lugt, inv. 5234

PROVENANCE

Simon Fokke, auction, Amsterdam 6 December 1784, album E, lot 462; John MacGowan, Edinburgh; Thomas Phillipps, London, 29 January 1804, lot. 407; William Young Ottley; Thomas Phillipps, London, 23 June 1814, lot 880; Sir Thomas Lawrence; Samuel Woodburn; Christie's, London, 26 June 1854, lot 2143; Dr V. Galippe; Mme Galippe; auction René Hémard, Paris, 11 April 1924, lot. 60; Louis Deglatigny, Rouen; Drouot, Paris, 15 June 1937, no. 160; Frits Lugt.

LITERATURE

Stechow 1954, pp. 286–9; Holzhausen 1954; Düsseldorf 1967: pp. 42, 265, no. 290; London, Paris, Bern, Brussels, 1972: pp. 86–7, cat. 57; Broos 1989.

Peeter Neeffs I has left us a legacy of hundreds of paintings, yet only a handful of his drawings remain. Of these, this is the only one to have been signed and dated. The drawing shows the interior of Bonn Minster and, if the signature is to be believed, Neeffs drew it in 1618. He was then around 40, had been married a few years and had just celebrated the birth of his second child, Lodewijk – his son Peeter Neeffs II would be born two years later. It appears from the baptismal registers that he lived in Antwerp during that period. A journey to Germany at that time would seem improbable unless it was one of short duration.

Bonn's twelfth-century Romanesque cathedral has been very faithfully rendered in this picture. To date there have been no structural alterations to the building, though its furnishings have undergone subtle changes over the centuries. The Gothic choir screen and the Calvary sculpture dating to around 1600 were removed in the course of the eighteenth century, while the entrance to the crypt was relocated to the middle of the staircase. The pulpit with canopy is now found on the left in the nave. The wooden pews along the nave and the side altars have all gone.

Several pencil sightlines can be seen running through the floor tiles, over the pews on either side of the nave and up to the triforium. The centre line runs through the keystones, the choir screen cross and the tiles in the middle of the floor. These sightlines do not meet at a single vanishing point; instead, they end variously below the altarpiece and above the parapet over the choir screen.

This drawing was touched up in the eighteenth century by Simon Fokke (Amsterdam 1712–1784 Amsterdam), an engraver from Amsterdam who owned Neeffs's drawing. When Fokke's art collection was auctioned in 1784, this drawing was described as follows: 'The Interior Confines of a Roman Catholic Chapel, the Pulpit is seen to one Side, and straight ahead the Steps to the Choir; all of which drawn with great Exactitude in Indian ink by P. Neefs 1618, and staffed by S. Fokke'. Fokke did not hold back from adding staffage to several of the drawings in his private collection. Drawings by Hendrik van Steenwijck and a drawing by Pieter Saenredam made in 1636, now at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, underwent the same fate. Although not widely realised, this practice was far from exceptional in the eighteenth century. In this case, Fokke clothed his figures in the French fashions of the 1620s.

Fig. 1
Gerrit Berckheyde, *Interior of Bonn Minster*, 1662, oil on canvas, 72.5 × 114 cm, Stadtmuseum Bonn

Three paintings by the brothers Gerrit and Job Berckheyde repeated virtually the same composition in 1662, 1668 and 1680, half a century after the drawing (fig. 1).[1] The composition of the painting from 1668 relies very heavily on the drawing. Nevertheless, apart from having different figures, the drawing on the left also has one bay less. It is not inconceivable that Gerrit Berckheyde had Neeffs's drawing in front of him, given that the drawing was in Amsterdam a century later. The drawing was evidently cut down on the left, which explains why the central perspective has shifted somewhat to the left and why the vertical crease at the centre line does not coincide with the middle of the paper. We know that at some time before 1660 Gerrit and Job Berckheyde embarked on a journey along the Rhine, which went past Bonn, where they visited the Minster. So, might the drawing be by Gerrit Berckheyde rather than Peeter Neeffs I? At first sight, it does not fit in with the work of Peeter Neeffs I in terms of composition or style. However, the absence of other, authenticated drawings by Peeter Neeffs I makes comparison highly problematic. To reach a definitive attribution will require a thorough study of all the architectural drawings still in existence combined with a technical analysis of signatures on the panels by Neeffs.

Claire Baisier

NOTES

1 Gerrit Berckheyde, 1662, oil on canvas, 72.5 × 114 cm, Stadtmuseum Bonn; Gerrit Berckheyde, 1668, oil on panel, 50.2 × 65.6 cm, Christie's, Amsterdam, 16 November 2005, lot 98, signed and dated lower right 'G. Berck.hey.e 1668, Job Berckheyde, 1680', collection of the University of Göttingen.

Cat. 14

Anonymous

Interior of an Imaginary Gothic Church without Staffage,
first half of the seventeenth century

Oil on panel, 43 × 53 cm

Private collection, Antwerp, inv. P089

PROVENANCE

Dorotheum Vienna, 13 October 2010, lot 565.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, M-1394.

No worshippers, no altarpieces, no funerary hatchments. This early seventeenth-century example is one of the few paintings of church interiors to have been left in an interim phase of the production process. The work shows how this perspective painter was capable of rendering ecclesiastical decor in the finest detail. The degree to which the details become fainter is responsible in part for creating the sense of distance. While the observer can still make out in the foreground the detailed texture of the walls and the delicate blind tracery, these fine details in the architecture become increasingly indistinct with each successive bay. However, there is a complete absence of staffage. The artist responsible for this probably did not pull out all the stops, as borne out by the brown void filling the passage through the choir screen.

With its two-storey inner walls without triforium, the Gothic church building is reminiscent of the interior of Antwerp's cathedral. The observer's perspective is shifted to the right, thus providing an oblique view of the nave. Although it may not be noticed at first glance – but is no less surprising for all that – sunlight can be seen entering from the left aisle. Since the choir usually lies towards the east, the sunlight in this instance must be coming from the north. This uncustomary incidence of light, which in Van Eyck's earlier *Madonna in the Church* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) was interpreted as containing hidden symbolism, appears quite frequently in several late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century paintings of interiors,[1] where rays of light from the north were also used to achieve greater compositional balance or to give additional emphasis to particular elements in a painting.

This painting was auctioned in Vienna in 2010 as a work by Hendrik van Steenwijck II (1580–before May 1640), an attribution currently subject to doubt. Although the work is very similar to the church interiors produced by that artist, it is missing some of his trademark features. The most striking of these is the absence of pale colours used to emphasise different contours and lines in the architecture. Generally speaking, Van Steenwijck used these when creating the details in, for example, Gothic arches and columns.

Maarten Bassens

NOTES

1 Panofsky 1953, pp. 147–8.

Cat. 15

Hendrik van Steenwijck II and Frans Francken II

Interior of a Gothic Church, 1639

Oil on canvas, 87 × 118 cm, monogrammed, signed and dated 1639

Maximilian Speck von Sternburg Stiftung at the Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, inv. G 1621

PROVENANCE

François-Corneille-Gislain De Cuypers de Reymenam; Arents, Brussels, 27 April 1802, lot 1, purchased for 190 guilders by François Xavier de Burtin, Brussels; Godfurneau, Brussels, 21 July 1819, lot 111, purchased around 1819 by Max Speck, Lützschena, incorporated to the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig in 1945, Speck von Sternburg Stiftung, Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, 1996.

LITERATURE

Jantzen 1910 (1979), p. 44, no. 283; Leipzig 1998; Nicolaisen 2005; Howarth 2009, pp. 159–60, II.B.45; Nicolaisen 2012, p. 296, no. 318; Maillet 2012, p. 392, M-1287.

This painting is somewhat incongruous in the oeuvre of Hendrik van Steenwijck II, as it is larger than 80 per cent of his church interiors. Its artistic quality can be seen in the fine graphic detail of the architecture, the atmospheric mood of the interior and the highly effective staffage of figures, altars, retables and paintings. It demonstrates how self-referential a work by a highly specialised painter can be: Steenwijck has used the architecture to preserve his portrait and place and date of birth for posterity. On the far right is a memorial with a man's portrait at the centre flanked by small pillars, with a coat of arms above and a plaque bearing an epitaph below. The portrait is of the artist himself. Its inspiration came from his engraved likeness by Paul Pontius in the greatest series of printed portraits made in the seventeenth century: Anthony van Dyck's *Iconographia* (before 1636–before 1641). Inclusion in this celebrated series of engravings based on drawings by the master would certainly have raised the status of those selected.

In bright yellow letters against a black background, the epitaph on the plaque reads: 'H.V.S. nat(us). Ant(werpen). // Ao MDLxxx M(ens). Sept(embris)', conveying the fact that Steenwijck was born in Antwerp in September 1580. The date of the painting is shown separately in the same historicising manner of the church interior, half hidden on a stone plaque in front of the altarpiece showing the Adoration of the Magi to the extreme left. The artist's place and date of birth are the only legible inscriptions in the painting, because they were intended as information; the inscriptions on retables and epitaphs were intended to conjure the illusion of a real church interior, but they are no more than imitations of letters.

The perspective method used to compose this interior was traditional: a nail was used to mark the vanishing point and threads extended from it, along which lines could be drawn. The hole left behind by the nail can still be seen on the left side of the choir screen next to the pulpit. The blue-black compositional lines (probably graphite) have now become visible through the paint, and these lines run through the highest points of the cross vault to the vanishing point.

Jan Nicolaisen

Cat. 16

Peeter Neeffs I and the workshop of Jan Brueghel I

Church Interior with Lady in Blue, c. 1620

Oil on panel, 31.8 × 41.8 cm

Private collection, Brussels

INSCRIPTIONS

Signed on the upper right of the arcade 'PEETER / NEEffS'. Labels on the reverse 'L.M.E. Dent' and '1887 Feb. 2nd no. 30 / Edward Dent Esq. N.275'.

PROVENANCE

Edward Dent; Rafael Valls, London.

LITERATURE

Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 130; Maillet 2012, p. 307, M-0776.

Antwerp's cathedral has clearly provided the inspiration for the crossing tower, the choir screen and the vertical elevation of this Brabantine Gothic church with three aisles. However, the west end of the church is pure imagination. To the rear left, we glimpse a park through an open door in a brightly illuminated side chapel. In the shadows next to the entrance to the chapel there is a wooden pew, suspended above which is an organ with painted panelling. The complex rib vaulting catches the eye and is also to be seen in a church interior by Peeter Neeffs I in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (inv. 683).

The figures in this atmospheric work attract our attention straightaway with their refinement. In the foreground a priest is speaking to an elegantly dressed couple accompanied by a little girl. The woman is wearing a striking gown of pale blue silk with a décolletage. Behind them, a young female beggar with a baby at her breast is receiving alms from a well-to-do lady. A few more beggars are seen alongside the pier to the right: an older man sitting on the floor and a young woman with three young children. These figures resemble the work of Jan Brueghel I; the staffage may have been by his daughter Paschasia Brueghel. Peeter Neeffs I was intimately connected with the Brueghel family in both a professional and a private capacity. Paschasia Brueghel was the godmother to one of his children[1], and it would seem from archived documents that she painted figures in his church interiors.

The panel used for this painting was produced using a hatchet and not a saw, which is indicative of its considerable age. Another undated version of this work is held at the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu, Romania (inv. 0783). Similar examples dated 1636 can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (a daytime scene, acc. no. 71.109) and at the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (a night scene, inv. SK-A-289). A variant on this composition at the Louvre in Paris is dated 1644. This composition, which Peeter Neeffs I certainly repeated some 15 times during the 1630s, largely refers back to paintings produced by Hendrik van Steenwijck II from 1600 to 1610.

Claire Baisier

NOTES

1 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 130.

Cat. 17

Peeter Neeffs I

Interior of a Gothic Church, c. 1650

Oil on canvas, 45 × 62 cm

Staatliches Museum Schwerin/Ludwigslust/Güstrow, inv. G 380

INSCRIPTIONS

Signed to the right on the vaulting 'PEETER NEEffS'. Reverse: seal of the Directeur Général des Musées (Vivant Denon) on the stretcher: seal with three five-pointed stars in crowned escutcheon, on an adhesive label numbered 198. Additional labels, also on the stretcher: Cassel | 96. In ink on the lining canvas: N.236, No 19, 165.

PROVENANCE

1815 from Napoleonic spoils; originally an acquisition from Landgrave Wilhelm VIII for the picture collection in Kassel; 1749 described in inventory there; 1816 inventoried as lost with the comment: 'This painting not returned in Paris in 1815 and according to information provided was probably handed over to another court from …ty.'

LITERATURE

Lenthe 1836, no. 165; Prosch 1863, IV 7; Schlie 1882, no. 716; Inventory 1920 ff.: no. 3036; Jürss 1982, Flamen (Flemish) no. 59; Schwerin 2003, pp. 74, 77, 142, no. 41; Maillet 2012, p. 337, M-0955.

This scene differs from the interiors that Peeter Neeffs I usually painted in that it gives the impression of depicting an interior that actually existed in a Brabantine Gothic church with three aisles. Our attention is drawn to the Renaissance choir screen in red and black marble decorated with white marble sculptures, which takes up the full width of the church, separating the triple bay choir from the rest of the church. At the same time, there is no transept, which indicates that this is a collegiate church or church attached to a monastery. In terms of its architecture, it is highly reminiscent of churches in Antwerp: round columns with cabbage-leaf capitals, cross vaults, windows with Gothic tracery, tombstones laid in the floor and altars on the north side against the columns. The blind pseudo-triforium without tracery is also noteworthy. Below the windows, two small pillars flank a blank wall, just as had long been the case at, for example, St Andrew's Church and St Walburga's Church in Antwerp. We can just make out the small doorways for passage beneath the windows. An open-work oculus above the high altar leads us to suspect that a cupola construction or tower stood at the east end.

A singular feature is the continuous row of canvases showing scenes from the life of Christ hung above the wainscoting and confessionals to either side of each of the side aisles. Some paintings are horizontal, others are more vertical in orientation, but all of them are the same height. The first canvas on the left shows the Wedding Feast at Cana, next to it Christ among the Doctors and possibly the Flight into Egypt; an Annunciation can be seen in the left foreground. To the right there is a succession of scenes from the Passion of Christ, starting at the back with the Last Supper, the Flagellation, the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ carrying the Cross, the Crucifixion and the Descent from the Cross. Many people are listening to the sermon being given from the pulpit, seen to the right in the nave.

In terms of its structure, composition and atmosphere, this painting is highly reminiscent of an interior of the church at Antwerp's St Michael's Abbey, painted by Peeter Neeffs I in 1658 (fig. 1). In that panel, all of the elements connected with architecture, furnishings and paintings correspond to reality and the date. If further identification of the church were needed, this is confirmed by a priest dressed in Norbertine habit in the foreground. Given that some of the details in the present painting seem so specific, it might be possible to identify the church. There are no other examples of this composition, which further confirms the hypothesis that this interior represents a church that really existed. Yet although the long choir with its choir screen, the preaching and the priests hearing confessions all point to a religious order such as the Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans or Augustinians, we are still unable to identify this church even today. Possibly it is a combination of several churches. The rows of paintings undoubtedly refer to the *Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary* panels in Antwerp's Dominican church (fig. 2).

Fig. 1
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of the Church of St Michael's Abbey*, 1658, panel, 38.5 × 52.5 cm, whereabouts unknown

Fig. 2
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of the Dominican Church in Antwerp*, panel, 68 × 105.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK-A-288

Claire Baisier

Cat. 18

Peeter Neeffs I (after)

Church Interior with Man in Red, c. 1630s

Oil on panel, 25.2 × 19.8 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Auktionsverket, Stockholm, 1968; Enneking, Amsterdam, 1969; Galerie Florence de Voldère, 2006.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, pp. 44–5 (fig.), p. 63 (fig.), p. 330, M-0918.

This is a close-up view of a small Gothic church with three bays; in the foreground there is a semi-circular choir with cupola, and at the back there are two side chapels with altars. In the altarpiece at the high altar we see an angel appearing before a kneeling figure, possibly St Francis receiving the Stigmata. A triptych showing the Calvary embellishes the side altar to the left, while *The Baptism of Christ* is seen at the side altar to the right. An organ is above the entrance to the side chapel on the left.

This painting is identical to a larger panel (38.5 × 26.8 cm) purchased in 2007 by the art dealers De Boer in Amsterdam. Even the figures are the same. We know of a further four versions of this composition, all of them approximately the same format but each one containing different figures and different altarpieces. Not a single one of them has been signed or dated. In paintings such as this, depicting highly atmospheric interior views of imaginary churches, architectural details can be rather clumsily rendered, particularly as far as the vaulting and blind tracery are concerned, and depiction of the windows and altarpieces can be also somewhat lacking in detail. The Peeter Neeffs I oeuvre includes works of this sort, which were intended for the open market, mass-produced and eagerly copied.

Claire Baisier

Cat. 19

Hendrik van Steenwijck II

Church Interior at Vespers, c. 1620

Oil on copper, 14.8 × 19.5 cm, signed below centre on column 'HS'

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

E. Bacon, Raveningham Hall, Norfolk, England; E. Baxter, England, 1902; Leonard Koetser Ltd., London, 1972; Christie's, London, 14 October 1983, lot 36; G.F.F. Davies; Barnham Broom, Scarsdale, New York; A. Davis, Scarsdale, New York; Leonard Koetser Gallery, London, 1972; Sotheby's, New York, 29 May 2003, lot 1.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 388, M-1266.

Steenwijck paints a scene in a Gothic church that shows a liturgical evening service being held in a side-aisle chapel illuminated by candles. The chapel takes up roughly the whole left half of the painting. On the right, we can make out part of the dimly lit choir partitioned off by a choir screen, which has more in keeping with a great arch. Each of the four columns on the right-hand side has its own altar with triptych. The first triptych is closed, while the three others further away are open, displaying figures in silhouette. A swallow's nest organ can be seen between the second and third columns (counting from the transept). Someone may be at the keyboard, as candlelight is reflected at the base of the innermost organ pipes. In the side chapel itself, roughly ten figures throng around a choir book. This may point to the performing of polyphonic music. Candles illuminate the choir book on either side. The only singer to wear a surplice over his cassock stands in the very middle at the back. The other singers are either dressed in cassocks or are cloaked. A triptych stands on the altar and its central panel may depict the Holy Family with St Anne. The simple rib vaulting, brightly lit by the candles on the gateway lintel, contrasts with the flamboyant Gothic tracery highlighted by the artist.

We see five men sitting in the choir stalls to the side. The old man in the centre is wearing a long, lighter-coloured cassock. A woman in a traditional *huyck* (long veil and cap) is kneeling at the open gate to the chapel. Another woman in a *huyck* is strolling in the direction of the chapel, accompanied on her left by a finely dressed woman. An old woman sits begging to the left of the chapel entrance. A few men are venturing towards the chapel. A group of men – perhaps members of a brotherhood (of St Anne?) – are standing in the nave on a level with the altar in order to hear the service. Given that no priest appears to be present at the altar, this may suggest that we are looking at evening prayers (Vespers). 'Alternatim' performance often added lustre to these services at Antwerp's cathedral, in which various verses from the *Magnificat* or from hymns such as the *Salve Regina* were alternated between vocal polyphony (in *fauxbourdon* or *faberdon* as it was called in Antwerp, or improvised counterpoint called *discant*) and organ.

The various versions of this chapel by night painted by Steenwijck attest to the theme's popularity. Nevertheless, there are many differences in terms of execution and technique, even when dealing with virtually exact copies. Although this work from Brussels is very similar to a version at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna,[1] it has more of an impasto technique and the figures' contours have been rendered less precisely, lending greater warmth and intimacy to the painting. A work that is almost the same can be found at the Ulster Museum in Belfast.[2] Steenwijck produced several types of painting that featured a chapel by night. This work differs from the others owing to the four columns with altarpieces, the foremost of which is closed. Another type, perhaps earlier in date and an example of which is on display at the Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo, might be more safely attributed to Steenwijck I or even Abel Grimmer (for a description of this work, see essay III pp. 38–55).

Fig. 1
Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Church Interior at Vespers*, c. 1610, oil on panel, 94 × 125 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. GE-4360

Lastly, Steenwijck II painted a further two types of chapel by night. An example of the first type hangs at the Hermitage in St Petersburg (fig. 1).[3] In that instance, the chapel's simple rib vaulting is rendered with far greater complexity and flamboyance. The painter also introduces flights of steps for access to the nave (three flights) and to the chapel (two flights). Much of the assorted staffage remains the same: the five men on the side pew, the singers (the majority of whom are wearing surplices over their cassocks) and the kneeling woman wearing a *huyck*. The chapel altarpiece depicts the Birth of Christ. The figures are more aristocratic in tone, shown either as couples or singly, and not in a group. Moreover, the painter has added a descending staircase in the left foreground by which a highborn couple is entering the church. The Brussels work presented here most closely resembles the second type of painting, examples of which can be found at the Musée des Beaux-

Fig. 2
Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Church Interior at Vespers,* oil on copper, 37.2 × 54.2 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen, inv. M 90

Arts in Caen (fig. 2)[4] and Welbeck Abbey.[5] In those cases, however, a decision has been made to create a broader panorama, as a result of which not four but five columns are in view along the side aisle on the right, the first of these having a closed altarpiece while the other altarpieces are open. Owing to this, we are also able to see a north entrance to the left, and greater depth is created in the side aisle on the left, which is accentuated by candlelight and permits us a view of the transept.

The Vespers in Steenwijck's chapel are very different in character from those by Neeffs. Neeffs gives prominence to the priest standing at the altar, at times holding a monstrance, other times not. The singers, altar servers and worshippers are depicted on their knees. In the case of Steenwijck, we see virtually no priests, the singers are given prominence and the worshippers also seem to be less attentive to their devotions (with the exception of the characteristically kneeling Grimmer-style woman in her *huyck*, an almost symbolic gesture of piety). Reference has already been made to depictions of the singers sometimes wearing surplices and sometimes not. Can these ambiguities be explained by the Lutheran background of the Steenwijck family? After all, Evensong, a prominent focus on polyphonic hymns and modest altarpieces, were also part of the Lutheran worship. Further research also needs to be done on the degree to which the combinations of staffage, scenery and architecture were part of a conceptual mood.

Björn Schmelzer

NOTES

1 Howarth 2009, II.B.76; Maillet 2012, M-1264.

2 Howarth 2009, II.B.151; Maillet 2012, M-1253.

3 Howarth 2009, II.B.91; Maillet 2012, M-1252.

4 Maillet 2012, M-1258.

5 Howarth 2009, II.B.12; Maillet 2012, M-1259.

Cat. 20

Peeter Neeffs II
with staffage by the workshop of Frans Francken II

Church Interior with Eucharistic Adoration with Benediction, c.1630s

Oil on panel, 28 × 39 cm

Private collection, Brussels, inv. M0833

PROVENANCE

Rafael Valls Gallery, London, 2005.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 316, M-0833.

It is evening. No light shines through the windows. In the second version of the painting by Peeter Neeffs II, there are only a few candles alight in the chapel. Does the light entering this interior come from God perhaps? Darkness permeates the foreground, the flight of steps that a canon is descending and the choir. Contours are well defined, not only those seen against the light, but also those in the shadows, such as the kneeling woman wearing the *huyck* (long veil and cap) at the chapel entrance.

The triptych above the altar in the chapel may represent the Ascension of Christ, but it could also be casting a symbolic celestial blue over the celebrant, the frontal and those present. The worshippers kneel piously before the great raised monstrance. In the left corner of the chapel, behind the chapel's enclosing wall and pillars, we can see the singers who are providing accompaniment to the Eucharistic Adoration with Benediction.

Just as prescribed, an altar server is swinging the thurible (censer containing incense) in front of the altar. Incense is used to cleanse and escort prayers as they rise up to God. The Leuven theologian Johannes Molanus (1533–85) was a fervent defender of the Tridentine rite that employed light – candles symbolising immaterial light sent by God – and incense – the burning of aromatic substances being used to purify inhalations by the Holy Spirit.[1] In this instance we see once again a church interior, staffed with figures and a retable, in service to the Catholic 'Propaganda Fidei' (see essay II pp. 22–37, especially p. 35).

Ursula Härting

NOTES

1 Hecht 2012, p. 148.

Cat. 21

Peeter Neeffs II

Evening Church Interior with the Hanging of a Funerary Hatchment, c. 1653

Oil on copper, 12.1 × 15.6 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Jean-Paul Meulemeester, Brussels; private collection UK; Floris van Wanroij Fine Art, Dommelen, 2016.

Lit here and there by candles and lamps, this is a highly atmospheric interior of a church in the evening. Some workmen are using a tall ladder to attach a funerary hatchment to the first column on the right. A hand barrow can be seen to the side of them. This small oval scene is framed by a *trompe-l'œil* marbled mount. Another version with the same dimensions, in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Strasbourg (inv. 207) and signed and dated 1654, has a pair showing a church interior by day (inv. 208).[1] A slightly larger example with a dog was auctioned at Drouot in 1989.[2] It has been suggested that the figures were added to the Strasbourg picture in the eighteenth century, but the existence of at least three versions with identical figures seems surely to contradict this.

We know of some 25 oval church interiors by Peeter Neeffs II, miniatures expertly painted on small copper panels measuring approximately 13 × 16 cm or even half that size. They usually come in pairs: one showing an interior by day, the other by night. Commonly, only one of the two companion pieces is signed. Most bear the signature 'P.N.' and are dated to the 1650s.[3] Therefore, it is very likely that the signature had been placed on this copper panel's lost companion piece, which would have depicted a church by day also in a marbled mount. A solitary specimen measuring 13 × 16.8 cm and with the full signature 'Peeter Neeffs 1653' on the marbled border would meet the criteria perfectly and thus would certainly qualify as the companion piece to this little painting (fig. 1).[4]

Claire Baisier

Fig. 1
Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of a Gothic Church by Day*, oil on copper, 13 × 16.8 cm, Sotheby's, London, 9 December 2004, lot 149

NOTES

1 Maillet 2012, p. 306, M-772, and p. 312, M-0810. Pijaudier-Cabot 2009, pp. 129–30, no. 78.

2 Maillet 2012, p. 312, M-0809.

3 Peeter Neeffs II, *Interiors of a Gothic Church by Day and by Night*, oil on copper, 10.5 × 14 cm (oval pair), signed 'P.N. / 1657', Richard Green, London, 1999; Peeter Neeffs II, *Interiors of a Gothic Church by Day and by Night*, oil on copper, 13 × 16 cm (oval pair), signed 'P.N. 1657', Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, inv. 6473 and 6475 (Maillet 2012, p. 324, M-0877 and M-0878).

4 Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of a Gothic Church by Day*, oil on copper, 13 × 16.8 cm, Sotheby's, London, 9 December 2004, lot 149. Maillet 2012, p. 303, M-0751.

Cat. 22

Peeter Neeffs II and Frans Francken III

Church Interior with Early Morning Procession, 1659

Oil on copper, 40 × 51 cm, signed and dated 'peeter/neeffs/1659'

Private collection, Antwerp, inv. P047

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, 30 November 1983, lot 240; private collection, Germany; Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 11 November 2008, lot 63.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 310, M-0793.

It is just before six according to the clock, and the sun is already rising in the east. The seemingly impenetrable darkness of the imposing church engages in its daily battle with the light. Although the side altars are still in the columns' shadow, the diffusely scattered funerary hatchments are gradually yielding up their hidden glory, thanks to the light shed by lit torches and candles. Slowly but surely, the spiritual timetable is also stirring into motion. In a side chapel in the aisle on the right a priest in a cope is leading some worshippers in morning prayer. Simultaneously in the nave a procession is setting off on its way. Preceded by two torchbearers and an acolyte, a priest is holding a ciborium at the ready. He is followed by members of the Brotherhood of the XIV-day Anointing. The procession is at the start of its progress through the parish, the brotherhood's purpose being to give Holy Communion to the sick and bedridden in their parish. Some kneeling beggars watch the spectacle closely.

Following his father's example, Peeter Neeffs II succeeded in constructing the grandeur of this imaginary Gothic church using only a few well-placed perspective lines. The angle is just to the left of centre and slightly elevated. The interior was inspired in part by that of Antwerp's Cathedral of Our Lady and, whether in an adapted form or otherwise, reappears several times in other works by the artist.

There need be no doubt that this is a work by Peeter Neeffs II. While his father signed his name in capitals, Peeter Neeffs II exclusively signed his own name in lower-case letters. Together with the year '1659', the painter's signature can be seen in lower case on the column to the right of the nave. The staffage is by Frans Francken III (Antwerp 1607–1667 Antwerp). Furthermore, the finishing decorative touches to the church building show clear references to paintings by Peeter Neeffs I.

Maarten Bassens

Divine Interiors

Architectural painting in the Northern Netherlands

The Burgeoning North

Bernard Vermet

Making a distinction between artistic developments in the Northern and Southern Netherlands in the sixteenth century is a complex undertaking, that is prone to misapprehensions. As long as the South still enjoyed the economic edge, many northern artists were attracted southwards; however, this migration went into reverse after the Fall of Antwerp (1585). There is rarely a question of any substantial differences between the two regions, but one can still say that the perspective genre began in Antwerp, even though both of its founders were from the North: Hans Vredeman de Vries (who was born in Leeuwarden around 1525/6) and Hendrik van Steenwijck I (who was probably born in Kampen around 1550).

In his *Schilder-boeck* (1604), Karel van Mander's first reference to a living painter concerns Hans Vredeman de Vries.[1] His entry is so detailed that he must surely have been personally acquainted with the artist. Vredeman de Vries's first tutor in Leeuwarden (Friesland) was a stained-glass artist from Amsterdam. This would seem to have immediately set the tone for the future, because nowhere else did architecture and perspective play as dominant a role, or so early, as in stained glass, reaching an early zenith in the 1540s with the windows at the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam and Sint Janskerk in Gouda by Lambert van Noort (Amersfoort c. 1520–1571 Antwerp) and Dirck Crabeth (near Cuijk or Liège? c. 1505–1574 Gouda), two artists who also alternated their work and residence between north and south.

After five years with the stained-glass artist in Leeuwarden and two years with a painter in Kampen, Vredeman de Vries relocated to Mechelen and Antwerp, where in 1549 he helped produce the triumphal arches for the Joyous Entry of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and his son, later Philip II of Spain. This, too, was highly significant, as it led to his coming into contact with Cornelis Floris (Antwerp 1514–1575 Antwerp) and Pieter Coecke van Aelst (Aalst 1504–1550 Brussels), whose designs, prints and books were, if anything, even more important in paving the way for the perspective genre. Shortly afterwards, Vredeman de Vries was once again in Friesland, where, while working for a 'Coffin-maker or Cabinetmaker', he saw and transcribed Sebastiano Serlio's books on architecture which had been published by Coecke. Once again this is revealing given that perspectives were a favourite theme for the inlays created by cabinetmakers. The presence of such books in the relative backwater of Friesland was not exceptional. As early as 1554, when designing the choir screen for the church in Oosterend (Easteren), near Sneek in Friesland, Heino Hagart ('Heinrich' in German) employed Cornelius Grapheus's 1550 publication of the previous year's Joyous Entry into Antwerp.[2] At the same time, Vincent Lucas was designing numerous Frisian tombstones richly embellished with architecture inspired by Floris and Coecke's prints. The most notable of these is his tombstone for Goffe van Roorda (died 1559) at the Martinikerk in Franeker. In this, the deceased appears to be standing either in or in front of a precisely executed church interior (fig. 1).

Vredeman de Vries's own series of prints appeared after 1555, but the only church-like interiors of his that date from before 1600 are found in *Scenographiae, sive perspectivae* (1560).[3] All of these have barrel vaulting supported by an architrave on classical pillars and thus not arches, never mind Gothic arches or cross vaulting.[4] At a pinch, and if generously inclined, one could say that the composition scheme – with a very dominant, almost tunnel-like single-point perspective flanked on either side by a

Fig. 1
Vincent Lucas, *Tombstone for Goffe van Roorda* (died 1559), Martinikerk (St Martin's Church), Franeker. Photographic Collection of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), Amersfoort, inv. 11450-19458

bay running in parallel to the picture plane – may have had some influence on the development of the Antwerp church interior. Moreover, in the same spirit of generosity, one might perhaps suggest that in his *Interior of the Palatine Chapel in Aachen* Hendrik van Steenwijck I was influenced by Vredeman de Vries's first plate from his series of oval perspectives of 1560–66.[5] However, leaving that aside, Vredeman de Vries was of little or no influence on the emerging visual language of Antwerp church interiors.

Vredeman de Vries had been painting palace exteriors and room interiors since the 1560s, but his earliest known Gothic church interior dates from 1594 (cat. 5). It is only in Part 1 of Perspective (1604) that a print of a Gothic church interior appears, but then again, just as in the case of the signed Gothic church interior in *Architectura* (1606), it could be by his son Paul.[6] A second church interior in *Architectura* is certainly by Hans, but it is of little architectural or compositional interest (unlike the staffage, where a calm Luther-style figure is contrasted against two hysterical bishops, closely observed by Christ from behind a pillar).[7] While works by Hans Vredeman de Vries generally radiate tranquillity and harmony, those by his son Paul are coarser, busier, more crowded and sometimes less credible structurally. He would seem to have been influenced in his stylistic language by Hendrick Aerts, but lacks his clarity, a clarity more associated with Hans.

Hendrick Aerts (?Mechelen c. 1565/75–1603 Gdańsk) was considered by Hans Jantzen to be the founder of the perspective genre in the Northern Netherlands. Jantzen knew of only one work definitely attributable to him, namely a church interior put into print by Jan van Londerseel, which, according to Jantzen, had to date to around 1600 (cat. 23). Jantzen observed, correctly, that virtually all of the Antwerp church interiors had straightforward single-point tunnel perspective, possibly combined with a discreet side chapel. In Holland on the other hand, the idea from the very start was to seek more complex spatial effects, which would ultimately lead to works with diagonal perspective in the 1650s.

Jantzen saw in Aerts's church interior the roots of these more complex spatial effects. The inexorable single-point tunnel perspective is subdued by the huge choir screen in the middle ground. Moreover, the staircase to the right leads the eye not only to the side but also upwards. Our gaze can continue to wander around the foreground instead of being pulled in a straight line into depth. This explains Jantzen's suggestion that Aerts came from Holland and could have been tutor to Bartholomeus van Bassen (?The Hague c. 1590–1652 The Hague) and Dirck van Delen (Heusden 1604/5–1671 Arnemuiden). It has since become clear that Aerts must have been working with Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries in the 1590s, first of all in Gdańsk (1594–5), but probably in Prague as well (1596–9), only to return to Gdańsk after Paul's departure from there, since Aerts died in the city in January 1603.[8] If we compare Aerts's print with the church interior by Hans Vredeman de Vries made in 1594, we can see that Aerts copied forms from Vredeman de Vries, such as the 'Antwerp' blind

traceries on the walls and the prominent baptismal font in the foreground, but the complex spatial definition as well as typically Mechelen (Keldermans-like) details, such as the ogee arches in the corners (spandrels) above the choir screen arches, are Aerts's own inventions.[9]

At first, Paul Vredeman de Vries must have been Hendrick Aerts's superior, but Aerts entirely surpassed Paul as a painter. In Paul's later church interiors, produced chiefly in Amsterdam, the dependent relationship is reversed, with Paul continually using elements from Aerts's print. He even completely transformed it into an outdoor space in a print of a square in *Architectura* (1606).[10] In the painting displayed in this exhibition, this influence can be seen above all in the choir screen (cat. 12). As mentioned before, when compared with the work by his father and by Aerts, here too Paul's work is over full and less transparent.

Although Paul painted in Amsterdam until his death in 1616, his style gained few imitators, and his father's style died with him. Conversely, the influence of the Aerts print was enormous. Many more than 50 painting copies are still in existence, attributed to just about every famous Northern and Southern Netherlandish architectural painter of the seventeenth century. However, hardly any of those many attributions are reliable and that is equally true of the exhibition example sometimes attributed to Peeter Neeffs I (cat. 24). Where they were painted by acknowledged architectural artists, the copies date mostly from the very beginning of their careers, while other painters not famed for their architecture were also able to try out the genre by copying this print. Consequently, it is seldom the case that we recognise the artist's own hand. All the same, we do see elements of the print in works that are indeed identifiable as by particular architectural painters (see below).

Like Paul Vredeman de Vries, Hendrik van Steenwijck II (Antwerp 1580–before May 1640 Leiden) also spent the final years of his life in Holland. In 1632, he left London for Amsterdam and in 1634 he was in Leiden, where he was to remain until his death in 1640, apart from a possible interlude in The Hague.[11] He continued to paint church interiors in his familiar, albeit increasingly dry style. As in the case of Paul Vredeman de Vries, he did not give rise to a school of imitators in the North. Only his wife and undoubted collaborator,

Fig. 2
Susanna van Steenwijck-Gaspoel, *Protestant Church Interior*, 1664, oil on panel (on the base of a drawer), c. 44 × 60 cm, Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar (acquired with the support of the Vereniging Rembrandt/Rembrandt Association (thanks in part to its BankGiro Lottery Acquisitions Fund), the VSBfonds charitable organisation and E. Snethlage-van Foreest's heirs)

Fig. 3
Gerard Houckgeest after Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Church Interior with Figures kneeling before the Altar*, c. 1640, etching and engraving, 25.7 × 22 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-1894-A-18248

Susanna van Steenwijck-Gaspoel (?London, after 1602/3–1664 Amsterdam), continued working in his style until her death. Her last work in 1664 was a cabinet decorated with biblical scenes and portraits of church reformers.[12] A Protestant church interior is painted on the base of the lowest drawer. Compositionally, it harks back to a work produced by Hendrick in 1616, but it is drier and of lesser quality (fig. 2).[13] All the same, according to Sandrart, Susanna did so well at painting perspectives that she was able to make a comfortable, respectable living.[14]

Bartholomeus van Bassen

The first full-blooded Northern Netherlands architectural painter was Bartholomeus van Bassen (?The Hague c. 1590–1652 The Hague). He was the illegitimate son of a prominent Catholic family. His father, Cornelis Ernst van Bassen, died in 1590 in his native city of The Hague, probably even before Bartholomeus was born.[15] We know next to nothing about where and under whom Van Bassen was taught to paint professionally. In 1613 he was enrolled as someone who had come from outside the city in the Guild of St Luke in Delft.

His earliest known work, made in 1614, shows a rather traditional church interior inspired by Antwerp's cathedral.[16] However, compared with Antwerp interiors we are closer to the subject and the vanishing point is not as far above eye level. Prominently displayed on the column to the left is a coat of arms with a knight on horseback. These are the arms of his father's family, Ernst van Bassen. The year 1614 was during the Twelve Years' Truce, meaning that Van Bassen could conceivably have been in Antwerp at the time as well. Proof that he must indeed have paid a visit comes from his second church interior dated 1616 (cat. 32). This time it is a very precise, close-up depiction of Antwerp's cathedral, although not, as was customary in Antwerp, a view straight along the

nave, but through the south side aisle. What is also unique to the work is that the central vanishing point is in the right half of the painting, while the eye is led between the splendid altars to the north transept at the back on the left. This creates a far more interesting spatial dynamic using two clear directions of view.

Van Bassen's third dated painting (1620) prominently displays the resting place of William I, Prince of Orange, in a not particularly spectacular imaginary church which principally serves as a backdrop.[17] The stone rood beam with ogee arches behind the tomb shows that Van Bassen, too, was aware of Aerts's print of the church interior, but otherwise he made relatively little use of it. Once again we see the Van Bassen arms, this time on the column to the far left. It was painted one year after the revolt led by Maurice, Prince of Orange, and Van Bassen, as a Catholic with Antwerp connections, would have wanted to make an emphatic expression of his loyalty to the new regime.

In the 1620s, Van Bassen initially painted grandiose and rather symmetrical imaginary Baroque church interiors. From the mid-1620s onwards, he returned to the idea of two directions of view and used Gothic architectural motifs increasingly often. Employing columns without capitals in hall church-type interiors, he managed to reduce the number of visually coercive lines of perspective, which helped in allowing the eye to wander freely through the picture. The best example of this is a Gothic church interior, loosely based on the Cunera church in Rhenen, painted in 1639 in the National Gallery in London.[18] In the same year, he painted his only other known interior of an existing church, a view from within the Grote Kerk of St James in The Hague, showing at the far left a memorial with the Ernst van Bassen coat of arms above the tomb of his father and grandfather.[19]

A print from around 1640 after a painting by Van Bassen once again shows the Gothic columns without capitals (fig. 3).[20] The central vanishing point 'collides' with a column altar, while depth is intensified in the area to its right. The print was produced by Van Bassen's (supposed) pupil Gerard Houckgeest (The Hague c.1600–1661 Bergen op Zoom). A painting from the same period adopts the same principle but is more extended widthways (cat. 25). Traditionally, the painting has been attributed to Van Bassen, but in my opinion it could have been done by Houckgeest as well.

We know of no other artists who studied under Van Bassen, but his style was imitated by others, including Jan van der Vucht (Rotterdam 1603–1637 Rotterdam), Nicolaes de Giselaer (Dordrecht 1583–1654/9?) and Jan Jansz. Buesem (Amsterdam 1599/1600–in or after 1649 Amsterdam).

Dirck van Delen

The second North Netherlands perspective painter of significance was Dirck van Delen (Heusden 1604/5–1671 Arnemuiden). He grew up in Breda and in 1625 was living in Middelburg. We can see how he seemed to be influenced by Van Bassen even in his earliest works, particularly his room interiors, but even so his work is too idiosyncratic, too individual, to assume that he had been under Van Bassen's tutelage. He relied greatly upon prints by Hans Vredeman de Vries for his earliest palace exteriors, while he also made use of Aerts's print for his church interiors. Traces of the latter can be most clearly seen in a church interior from 1627 now in St Petersburg.[21] However, in a church interior in the Rijksmuseum, dated 1630 and depicting the Iconoclastic Fury, we can also recognise the print's *repoussoir* in the steps with the column and the bishop's statue in the foreground (fig. 4). More than likely the near blockade of the central vanishing point by the column in the middle ground derived from, or was inspired by, Van Bassen's work, while once again the architectural structure is characteristic of Van Delen in the way that it zigzags from foreground to background, becoming ever lighter in tone.

It is notable that after 1648 Van Delen began to maintain contacts in Antwerp. Although he generally painted his own staffage prior to this, from this point onwards the staffage was sometimes executed by painters such as Gonzales Coques and David Teniers. He was also a great influence on later architectural painters from Antwerp, starting with Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg, whose palaces bear so many similarities to works by Van Delen that we can only assume there must have been some sort of master-pupil relationship between them.[22] However, Von Ehrenberg's church interiors tie in much more closely with the tradition peculiar to Antwerp, not least because Van Delen himself scarcely painted any church interiors again after 1645/50.

Fig. 4
Dirck van Delen, *Church Interior showing the Iconoclastic Fury,* signed and dated 1630, oil on panel, 50 × 67 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK-A-4992

In addition to Von Ehrenberg, Van Delen's other students were Hans Jurriaensz. van Baden (Steinbach 1604–1677 Amsterdam) and Daniel de Blieck (Middelburg c.1610–1673 Middelburg). Both of them painted several copies of works by Van Delen, roughly ten years after the originals, leading us to assume that they formed part of their tuition exercises at the workshop. Shortly after the creation of the 'Delft church interior' in 1650, to which I shall return later, De Blieck also placed his whole focus on painting realistic church interiors. In some cases he fell into step with oblique diagonal perspective, but in others he employed conventional central perspective. A magnificent example of the latter type is on display at the exhibition: *Interior of St Lawrence's Church in Rotterdam* (c.1655). The inspiration for this probably came from an as yet unknown work by Anthonie de Lorme (Doornik 1610–1673 Rotterdam). De Lorme studied under Jan van der Vucht and he, too, made the transition after 1650 from imaginary to realistic church interiors. However, whereas De Lorme carried on painting Rotterdam's St Lawrence's Church until his death, after 1656 De Blieck reverted almost completely to his tutor Van Delen's imaginary genre.

Pieter Saenredam

Pieter Saenredam (Assendelft 1597–1665 Haarlem) earns a special position among the architectural painters' ranks. He was the son of Jan Saenredam, a leading engraver from the Haarlem school of Mannerists and who had studied under Hendrick Goltzius. Pieter himself was tutored by the historical painter Frans de Grebber, but afterwards concentrated entirely on painting architecture. While paintings of Antwerp's

Fig. 5
Pieter Saenredam, *Interior of St Odulf's Church in Assendelft*, signed and dated 1649, oil on panel, 49.6 × 45 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK-C-217

cathedral and city churches hardly ever appear very naturalistic, not even when the architecture and its contents have been depicted in quite some detail, Saenredam's churches seem painstakingly realistic, as if rendered by an architect or architectural historian. His viewpoint is invariably from low down, at eye level and very close up, thus his pictures seem highly naturalistic, as if one is present in the interior. He made meticulous sketches on site, often adding the date, his viewpoint and structural notes. Based on these sketches he made construction drawings in preparation for the final paintings. He never converted to oblique diagonal perspective, but did sometimes reach similar effects by choosing quite remarkable standing positions. Alongside the elementary central perspective seen in prints by Vredeman de Vries, he also employed other auxiliary techniques that were much more technical.

However, the true genius of Saenredam lay in what he ultimately managed to express using all his technique and ingenuity. Other realistic church interiors by Dutch artists can impress because of their precision and truthfulness to nature, but Saenredam sought greater heights and, in almost abstract simplicity, a resolute form of absolute beauty. His work reflected the spatial and aesthetic ideal of Dutch Classicism, as exemplified in the ecclesiastical architecture of Jacob van Campen. Saenredam was acquainted with Van Campen and painted the interior of his Nieuwe Kerk in Haarlem. That aside, the ideal towards which Van Campen had been striving and that Saenredam was trying to capture on canvas was rendered to even better effect in paintings such as his *Interior of St Odulf's Church in Assendelft* (fig. 5).

Saenredam had several imitators in Haarlem, in particular Job Berckheyde (Haarlem 1630–1693 Haarlem), Gerrit Berckheyde (Haarlem 1638–1698 Haarlem) and Isaak van Nickelen (Haarlem 1632/3–1703 Haarlem). All of them painted the interior of St Bavo's Church (Sint-Bavokerk) in the city. Isaak van Nickelen hardly did anything else in fact. One notable exception is his interior of Antwerp's cathedral (cat. 35). Even though the altars, the columns, the side aisles, the crossing and the cross vaulting seem to refer back to Antwerp, the structure of the inner wall of the central nave is so dominant that the overall impression is that we are actually looking at a Catholicised version of Haarlem's St Bavo's Church. A second, signed *Interior of St James's Church in Antwerp* (cat. 40) is a far more faithful rendition and has a spatial focus and composition that is wholly unusual for Van Nickelen. The work is so far removed from virtually all other examples of Van Nickelen's oeuvre that I would have no hesitation in rejecting the attribution were it not for the fact that a *Palace Hall* at the Louvre (also signed) seems to have been produced by the same painter.[23]

The Delft Church Interior

In 1650, three painters focused almost simultaneously on painting the interiors of Delft's Oude Kerk and Nieuwe Kerk using oblique diagonal perspective. These were Gerard Houckgeest (The Hague c.1600–1661 Bergen op Zoom), Emanuel de Witte (Alkmaar 1617–1692 Amsterdam) and Hendrick van Vliet (Delft 1611/2–1675 Delft), followed shortly afterwards by Cornelis de Man (Delft 1621–1706 Delft). Diagonal perspective means that a building's walls that stand at right angles to each other do not run either parallel to the image plane or towards the central vanishing point, following the lines of the square tiles of most floors in Antwerp church interiors, but instead follow their diagonals, running to two points at equal distance from the central vanishing point. Those two points are called the distance points.[24] Consequently, there is no longer one viewpoint but two, which feels more natural and less coercive. The painting by Hendrick van Vliet in this exhibition is an example of oblique diagonal perspective (cat. 27).

It is assumed that Houckgeest developed the concept, because he was already an architectural painter – while previous to this De Witte had chiefly produced genre paintings and Van Vliet portraits – and because this development would seem to be a natural progression of earlier spatial experiments by Houckgeest and by Van Bassen. All the same, given that he changed over from fantasy to reality at the same time, there was evidently something more to it. One reason may have had its roots in the start of the First Stadtholderless Period (1650–72). The first works all bear a face on the tomb of William I, Prince of Orange, and thus could have been a political statement, just as in the case of Van Bassen's depiction of the subject thirty years earlier. Moreover, although Anthonie van Leeuwenhoek was only 18 in 1650, he may also have played a part in choosing this remarkable viewpoint, given his knowledge of optics and camera obscuras.

Following his move to Bergen op Zoom, Houckgeest began painting the interior of the Gertrudiskerk, but at the same time, just like De Blieck, he also returned to the Baroque, imaginary architecture from before 1650. In actual fact, the Delft church interiors met only with brief success. De Witte also evolved in a different direction. Even in his first works in Delft he often painted in a broader style than Houckgeest and Van Vliet, being more interested in the atmosphere and the interplay of light and dark on the walls, columns and floor. Once in Amsterdam, he continued in that vein and produced church interiors that are not realistic despite appearances. The church in the exhibition picture looks very naturalistic and closely resembles the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, but the lozenges on the capitals do not appear there or elsewhere and the nave has only four bays, assuming that to the far right the steps under the organ are visible (cat. 28). Were you of a mind to plot the lines of perspective, you would further note that while a great many do meet neatly at one point, this is not true in all cases. For De Witte in the end it was all about creating the atmosphere in the church rather than creating the church itself.

NOTES

1 Van Mander 1604 (1969), fol. 265r–267r. www.dbnl.org/tekst/mand001schi01_01/mand001schi01_ 01_0253.php (accessed February 2016).

2 See Kuyper 1994, pp. 145–8, figs. 160, 161 et passim. It is possible prior to this that Hagart had studied under Cornelis Floris, but he is only documented in Floris's workshop in 1563.

3 *Scenographiae, sive perspectivae*, publisher Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp 1560 (Hollstein c.1450–1700 (1997), vols. XLVII and XLVIII, Vredeman de Vries, Part I and II).

4 In particular, Hollstein, op. cit., nos. 32, 38 and 42.

5 Hollstein, op. cit., no. 52 from the Series series of oval perspectives, publisher Hieronymus Cock, Antwerp c.1560–6 (Hollstein, op. cit., nos. 51–71).

6 Hollstein, op. cit., no. 565 from *Perspective* ... vol. 1, publisher H. Hondius, Leiden 1604 (Hollstein, op. cit., nos. 517–67) and Hollstein, op. cit., no. 623 from *Architectura* ..., publisher H. Hondius, Leiden 1606 (Hollstein, op. cit., nos. 593–623).

7 Hollstein, op. cit., no. 622.

8 See Aerts biography in this book, p. 168.

9 The ogee arch is encountered anywhere members of the Keldermans family worked after the late fifteenth century, including in the Northern Netherlands, in particular in Middelburg (town hall) and Delft (choir extension of the Oude Kerk).

10 Hollstein op. cit., no. 620. An over-ornate reverse image copy of the church interior, erroneously attributed to Hendrik van Steenwijck II, is held at Nostell Priory (inv. 109; Howarth 2009, no. II.B.92; Maillet 2012, M-0015).

11 See Steenwijck biography in this book, p. 171.

12 Alkmaar 2015.

13 Ibid., p. 25.

14 Sandrart 1675, II, book 3, p. 299.

15 See Vermet 2014, p. 8.

16 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Maillet 2012, M-0130.

17 Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest.

18 Inv. NG. 3164. Maillet 2012, M-0159. The church is often taken for the Cunerakerk in Rhenen, but despite its passing resemblance this is stretching things a little far.

19 Kunsthandel Hoogsteder, The Hague, ?1979, Maillet 2012, M-0207. First remarked upon by Carla Scheffer in her undergraduate dissertation on Van Bassen, University of Leiden 1987.

20 The print was printed by Jan Pietersz. Berendrecht (died c.1645). Its interior strongly resembles the midsection of Van Bassen's church interior dated 1639 in the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest (inv. 246. Maillet 2012, M-0163).

21 Hermitage, St Petersburg, inv. 1812. Maillet 2012, M-0320.

22 In 1666, Van Delen donated to Antwerp's Guild of St Luke an *Allegory of the Arts* (in excess of two metres square) with staffage by Theodoor Boeyermans, whose monogram can be seen on the canvas (Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 378). The architecture is said to be by Van Delen himself, but may have been done in part by Ehrenberg.

23 Based on the continued absence of a particular organ in St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk), then in all events the design of this painting would appear to date to before 1672, which removes the possibility that both works could have been by the hand of Isaak's son, Jan (born around1655/6). That aside, the works attributed to him are of very mediocre quality.

24 The distance points are so called because when the painting is viewed as a glass plate onto which the church interior has been painted as if it is seen through that glass plate, the distance of the eye to that glass plate is the same as the distance from the central vanishing point to those distance points.

Cat. 23

Jan van Londerseel

Fantasy Church Interior after Hendrick Aerts, c. 1600

Engraving, 19.5 × 28.2 cm

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-4625

Cat. 24

Anonymous

Church Interior after Hendrick Aerts, 1636

Oil on copper, 28.5 × 41.5 cm

Private collection, Brussels

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 182, M-0030.

Cat. 25

Bartholomeus van Bassen and/or Gerard Houckgeest

Church Interior, c. 1640

Oil on panel, 38 × 53.3 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Collection Chwinner, Frankfurt am Main; Sotheby's, London, 12 July 1978; Galerie P.Y. Gabus, 23–30 November 1987, lot 44.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 210, M-0194.

Cat. 26

Daniel de Blieck

St Lawrence's Church in Rotterdam, 1654

Oil on panel, 90.5 × 122.5 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Galerie E. Deutsch, Paris, 20 March 1993.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 224, M-0279.

Cat. 27

Hendrick van Vliet

Interior of the Oude Kerk in Delft, c. 1670

Oil on panel, 52 × 41.5 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, 5 April 1995, lot 72; Johnny Van Haeften, London, 1996.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 426, M-1492.

Cat. 28

Emanuel de Witte

Church Interior with Gravedigger, 1678

Oil on panel, 50.2 × 40 cm

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, 5 April 1995, lot 72; Johnny Van Haeften, London, 1996.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 480, M-1818.

Divine Interiors

Portrayals of Antwerp's churches

The Cathedral of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal)

Claire Baisier

Following a meticulous study of the more than 150 paintings that depict the Cathedral of Our Lady, it has emerged that only a dozen examples provide truly interesting and accurate information. The remainder were mass-produced by the father and son duo, Peeter Neeffs I and Peeter Neeffs II (cats. 33 and 34). Their paintings were undoubtedly intended as souvenirs of Antwerp for the open art market. They almost always show the same image, painted from the same corner, but populated on each occasion with different clusters of people, painted by an artist specialising in figures. Everything is correctly reproduced but without too much attention to detail in order to keep prices low. Nearly three quarters of these mass-produced works are neither signed nor dated. By contrast, the level of detail contained in 12 interiors dating from 1593 to 1668 is such that we have a precise idea of the actual situation at the time they were painted.

The oldest known interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady dates from 1593 and was painted by Hendrik van Steenwijck I (c. 1550–1603) (cat. 30). The staffage has been convincingly attributed to Jan Brueghel I (1568–1625) based on two studies showing comparable groups of figures, the first of which is in the British Royal Collection (Windsor Castle), while the second was auctioned in 1970 at Sotheby's, New York.[1] The people's clothing is typical for around 1610, which means that the figures were added almost 20 years later. This was in no way unusual.

A second version of this painting recently came to light (cat. 29), and everything points to this exceedingly well-preserved panel, albeit unsigned and undated, being just a little older than the example from Budapest. The figures were clearly painted by Hendrik van Steenwijck I himself and not by a figure painter.

Both paintings are unique documentary records for research into the interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady in the period immediately following Calvinist rule, when the building's restoration was in full progress. Eight years after the liberation of Antwerp, its main church had still not returned to normal by any means, despite the persistent pressure exerted by the city council on the guilds and trades to put their altars in order as quickly as possible. It would be many more years before the Cathedral of Our Lady regained her former lustre. Elements can be seen in these very early records which in time would be replaced by Renaissance constructions.

Despite suffering numerous injuries and repairs, the Gothic choir screen, erected in 1469–75, remained in place until the end of the sixteenth century.[2] The triumphal rood loft above the choir screen consisted of a gigantic cross (the rood) in polychrome and gilt wood with God the Father above it and the dove of the Holy Spirit below, a sun and moon at each end of the arms of the Cross, and small statues of the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist on a lintel. Two other crosses stood

against the wall of the choir showing the two thieves who were condemned to death with Christ. These components of the triumphal group correspond in every detail with the records kept between 1546 and 1548 regarding payments made to the sculptor Anthonis van Breda.[3] This choir screen is much older than the Renaissance-style choir screen that appears in most interiors of the cathedral. The first stone for this ornamental structure, made in various types of coloured marble, was laid in 1596. It remained standing for two whole centuries before it was destroyed during ransacking by French invaders in 1798.[4]

Guild and trade association altars, sometimes enclosed by wooden altar rails, stand against the columns on either side of the nave. The Mercers Guild Altar stood against the fourth column on the right, embellished with a triptych with a central panel depicting Christ and the Penitent Sinners. Willem Key (1515–68) received the commission to paint it shortly after the Iconoclastic Fury. Set above the profiled cornice, a gilt-framed tondo contained a painting of St Nicholas, the patron saint of mercers.[5] Five years later, this altar was lost when a new portico altar was commissioned in alabaster, basanite and marble from the De Nole studio.[6]

Also of interest is the altar seen to the far left in the painting: the Altar of the Market Gardeners dedicated to Our Lady on the Pole (Onze-Lieve-Vrouw op 't Stokske).[7] It appears from archive records that the Market gardeners' Altar was initially embellished with *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (1568) by Frans Floris (1519/20–70).[8] Later, in 1585, the market gardeners commissioned a triptych of *Adam and Eve in the Earthly Paradise*, which can be seen here. Originally, the church wardens had *The Adoration of the Shepherds* placed on the high altar, where it remained until Rubens completed his *Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven* in 1625.[9] It was then that the triptych of Adam and Eve in the Earthly Paradise was removed from the Market Gardeners' Altar, because it was considered offensive, and was once again replaced by the old altarpiece showing *The Adoration of the Shepherds*.[10]

NOTES

1 Ertz 1979, figs. 622–3; Antwerp 1998, p. 280, figs. 91b, 91c.

2 It would appear from the church archives that the church wardens did indeed purchase white limestone and bluestone between the years 1469 and 1475. Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 5.

3 Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 448–9.

4 Ibid., pp. 6–7.

5 OCMWA, Old Archives, GH.83 accounts of the Mercers 1538–73, fol. 231r, 234v, 235r, 242v. Prims 1938, pp. 332–3; Van de Velde 1993b, p. 188; Grieten 1995, p. 135; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 359.

6 Geudens 1891–1904, vol. 1, pp. 104–13; Prims 1938, p. 333; Jansen and Van Herck 1943, p. 16, no. 13; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 15–16, 360.

7 Prims 1939, p. 339.

8 Frans Floris, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, oil on panel, 249 × 193 cm, 1568, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 113. Descamps 1769, p. 152; Van Mander 1936, p. 185; Van Brabant 1974, p. 219; Van de Velde 1975, pp. 325–7; Vervaet 1976, pp. 209–10; Antwerp 1988, p. 138.

9 Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 363–4.

10 Van de Velde 1975, pp. 326, 498, doc. 121.

Cat. 29

Hendrik van Steenwijck I

Interior of the Cathedral, before 1593

Oil on panel, 50 × 62.4 cm

Private collection, Brussels

INSCRIPTIONS

Mark on frame 'Zollamt M. Gladbach'; mark on stretcher 'Stockholm'.

PROVENANCE

Galeria Crespi, Milan; Grassi, Drouot, Paris, 6 June 1914, lot 77; private collection Sweden; P. de Boer, Amsterdam, 2015–16; BRAFA, Floris van Wanroij, January 2016.

LITERATURE

Venturi 1900, pp. 320–1; Jantzen 1910 (1979), p. 27, no. 440, p. 165, fig. 7; Linnik 1958, p. 353; Howarth 2009, p. 115, I.39; Maillet 2012, p. 377, M-1195.

Cat. 30

Hendrik van Steenwijck I, figures by Jan Brueghel I

Interior of the Cathedral, 1593 and 1609

Oil on panel, 45.2 × 62.5 cm, signed and dated on tombstone bottom centre 'STEENWIJCK 1593'

Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, inv. 579

PROVENANCE &

Esterházy collection, Vienna, Schloss Laxenburg (before 1812). Acquired by the museum from the Esterházy family in 1871.

LITERATURE

Frimmel 1891, pp. 206–7; Jantzen 1910 (1979), pp. 27, 41, 44, 170, no. 429; Wurzbach 1910, p. 60; Gerson 1960, p. 68; Budapest 1968, pp. 665–6; Ertz 1979, cat. 203, fig. 620; Jantzen 1910 (1979), p. 234; Lawrence 1982, p. 19, fig. 6; Nuremberg 1986, no. 28; Van Langendonck 1988, p. 8, fig.1; Van Langendonck 1993, p. 115, fig. 1; Babina 1996; Antwerp 1998, pp. 278–80, no. 91; Ertz and Nitze-Ertz 2008–10, vol. 4, p. 1358ff.; Howarth 2009, pp. 105–6, I.8.

Cat. 31

Peeter Neeffs I

Interior of Antwerp's Cathedral, c. 1610

Oil on panel, 75 × 107.1 cm, signed on the tomb slab to the lower left 'PEETER NEEFS'

Private collection, Belgium

PROVENANCE

Kunsthandel Sint-Lucas, 1967; antiquarian Michel Bascourt, the Hague, 2008; Bernaerts auction house, Antwerp, 1 December 2014, lot 50.

LITERATURE

Baisier 2008, pp. 28–40.

A few years have passed and in that brief space of time the interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady has undergone an impressive evolution, transforming from a half-empty, plundered church into a sumptuous interior with brand new Baroque altars on either side of the nave. The painting by Neeffs presents us with a manifestation of a thriving social and religious community by showing a service and, here and there, worshippers expressing their piety either alone or in small clusters. In the south side aisle we can see a white catafalque. Following the Twelve Years' Truce, the cathedral had once again become a meeting place.

An older Gothic triumphal rood loft with statuary was replaced in 1608–9 by a new structure produced by the sculptors Robrecht and Jan de Nole.[1] Once the vaulting above the nave was completed in 1613–14, statues of the apostles were then put in place against the columns lining the nave. Peeter Neffs's view shows the situation as it was between these two projects.

Concerning the guild and trade association altars on either side of the nave, the last two in the fifth bay are readily identifiable. The Weavers' Altar was on the left of the nave. After its re-erection in around 1596, it did not take long before the weavers added to it a triptych by Frans Francken I (1542–1616), *The Resurrection of Christ*. During the period under French rule, both the altar and central panel were lost. In 1883, the side panels, including a *Noli me Tangere* on the right panel, ended up in Antwerp's St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk).[2]

The altar of the armed Guild of the Young Archers (Gilde van de Jonge Handboog) was located next to the fifth pillar on the right of the nave. It was erected in 1598 by the De Nole brothers after a design by Otto van Veen (1556–1629).[3] In 1599, as an embellishment for this new altar, a triptych was commissioned from Wenceslas Coeberger (1560–1634), who was then living in Rome.[4] Exceptionally, this altar survived the period under French rule. During the public auction of contents, the altar was sold to a brewer who for reasons unknown left it in situ. However, the cathedral wardens subsequently sold it in 1867 to St James's Church,[5] where it stands to this day in the Chapel of the Presentation of Our Lady ('Kapel van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw Presentatie'), albeit without Coeberger's triptych, the central panel of which, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, is on display at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy.[6]

Fig. 1
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp*, panel, 73.5 × 92.5 cm, signed and dated 'PEET. NEEFS fecit anno 1610', Hermitage, St Petersburg, inv. GE 6019

This painting belongs to a unique series of some six interiors of the cathedral that differ in a variety of ways from the usual portrayals.[7] These panels are relatively large in format, on average 80 × 100 cm, and all of them bear the signature of Peeter Neeffs I. One example is also dated 1610 (fig. 1). This date has been fully validated by an analysis of the furnishings and art works based on archive sources. The guild and trades altars are equally visible to the left and right because the spectator's viewpoint is in the centre of the nave with his or her back to the porch. The viewpoint is also very low to the ground. The composition has been shifted slightly to the left, making it possible to see more of the south side aisles. The staffage and details of the altarpieces are generally of higher quality in the other paintings.

Claire Baisier and Maarten Bassens

NOTES

1 Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 6.

2 Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 360; Baisier 2008, pp. 31–2; Peeters, 2003, pp. 79–81.

3 Jansen and Van Herck 1943, p. 15, no. 12; Casteels 1961, pp. 108–9, 259–60; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 23–4.

4 Wenceslas Coeberger, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, oil on canvas, 288.5 × 207.5 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy, inv. 92. Berbie 1756, p. 7; Casteels 1961, p. 108; Freedberg 1976, p. 135; Brussels and Rome, 1995, pp. 146–7, cat. 60; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 23–4, 366–7.

5 Jansen and Van Herck 1943, p. 15, no. 12; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 23–4, 366–7.

6 Descamps 1769, p. 141; Vlieghe 1973, p. 344; Van de Velde 1993a, p. 198; Meganck 1998, p. 22; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 366–7.

7 Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp*, canvas, 81.9 × 106.7 cm, Christie's, London, 19 May 1989, lot 187; idem, panel, 51 × 66.5 cm, Sotheby's, London, 11 April 1990, lot 142; idem, Arthur G. Tite London, 1958; idem, panel, 71 × 100.5 cm, Brian Koetser Gallery, Spring 1969.

Cat. 32

Bartholomeus van Bassen and Sebastiaen Vrancx

Interior of the Cathedral, 1616

Oil on panel, 63.2 × 104.8 cm, signed on a column socle 'B.v.BASSEN' and dated on the tombstone centre right 'anno 1616 ad honorem dei'

Courtesy of Mr Jean Moust, Old Master Paintings, Bruges

PROVENANCE

Collection of Dr Cornelis Johannes Karel van Aalst, Hoevelaken, on loan to the Centraal Museum Utrecht between 1933 and 1960; Christie's, London, 1 April 1960, lot 3; Neumeister, Munich, 24 March 1999, lot 382; Neumeister, Munich, 23 June 1999, lot 382; Sotheby's, London, 12 July 2001, lot 173; Drouot, Paris (Maître Marc-Arthur Kohn) 6 March 2002, lot 13; Drouot, Paris (Maître Marc-Arthur Kohn), 9 March 2015 lot 1; Galerie Jean Moust, Bruges, 2015.

LITERATURE

Brussels 2004, Maillet 2012, p. 199, M-0131.

This panel dated 1616 gives us a very interesting and unusual view of the interior of Antwerp's cathedral. It has been painted from the south side aisle and provides an exceptional view of several altars on the right of the nave. It was a vantage point not repeated by any other painter. This is an early work by the painter and architect Bartholomeus van Bassen of The Hague, who became a master in Delft in 1613, but who may possibly have been born in Antwerp. This work and a large canvas of 1614[1] depict a Gothic Catholic church and testify to the influence of Hendrik van Steenwijck II and Peeter Neeffs I on the young Van Bassen (fig. 1).

On the far left we see the Young Archers Altar (Altaar van de Jonge Handboog) with closed panels (1599, Wenceslas Coeberger). The tableau runs across two panels and depicts St Sebastian being tied to a tree by two executioners to be shot through with arrows. The side panels were lost during the seventeenth century. This is also the only painting in which we can see one of the two flanking bowmen's statues in white Avesnes limestone (1598, Robrecht and Jan de Nole). The construction, with its red marble columns with white marble Corinthian capitals and white marble statuary, corre-

sponds exactly to the present-day appearance of the altar at St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk). It is also fascinating to see the highly detailed depiction of the wooden altar rail with small copper balusters and herms in pure Floris style (1596, Cornelis Floris III).[2]

Next in line is the Mercers' Altar, decorated with *Christ and the Penitent Sinners* (1608, Otto van Veen). No other interior provides us with a clearer view of the whole altar, in particular its crown: the statue of St Nicholas seated in a niche composed of black basanite, supported by two pillars in red marble with three smaller statues above.

Bartholomeus van Bassen furnishes the observer with a unique view of the Altar of the Old Archers in the south transept. In all the 'traditional' interiors, painted from the vantage point of the nave, this altar was concealed behind a forest of columns. The commission for the wooden altar was placed with Otmaer van Ommen (1540–after 1617) on 30 January 1591. Given the insistence of the guildsmen that the altar be built in the manner of the St George's Altar of the Old Crossbowmen in the north side aisle, the whole structure was crowned with an equestrian statue of St Sebastian, despite the saint never being portrayed in such a way in traditional iconography.[3] The impressive altar rail also catches the eye, the first such rail to have been made in marble and not wood. This enclosure was made at almost the same time as the altar by the sculptor Rafaël Paludanus and stonemason Jacques Fourmanoir, using marble, black basanite, alabaster and bluestone.[4] It emerges from the commission of the nine alabaster angels that the altar rail was over a metre in height, which is certainly confirmed by Van Bassen's interior.[5]

The small door to the right of the altar, which still gives access to the curates' sacristy, indicates the high degree of accuracy in Van Bassen's painting. Nevertheless, he has placed the organ in the wrong spot, above the entrance to the north ambulatory, whereas it was actually on the south side.

Although this work was signed by Van Bassen and dated 1616 on a column socle '*ad honorem dei*' (to the honour of God) his authorship in the strict sense can be claimed only for the church architecture. Both the figures and the altars clearly reveal the style of the Antwerp painter Sebastiaen Vrancx (1573–1647). The

Fig. 1
Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, oil on canvas, 104.5 × 136.5 cm, Sotheby's, New York, 27 January 2005, lot 129, signed 'B v Bassen 1614'

closed forms used to depict the figures, the reinforcing dark outlines, the schematic faces and the great attention to form and colour in the clothing are all characteristic of this master's oeuvre. However, documentary evidence suggests that Vrancx had a smaller input into church decoration. One relevant exception to this is a church interior of 1613 by Paul Vredeman de Vries at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels (cat. 12). With greater clarity than is possible with the naked eye, infra-red reflectography of this panel has brought to light the distinctive style of the church's architectural structure with its highly systematic lines of perspective as against the looser painting style used for altars and figures, both of which have been painted over the architectural features, interconnecting well in terms of painting technique. The present exhibition uniquely allows us to see for ourselves how Vrancx's style hardly altered between 1613 and 1616, not only in terms of his figures but also his church decoration.

Claire Baisier and Joost Vander Auwera

NOTES

1 Sotheby's, New York, 27 January 2005, lot 129, signed 'B v Bassen 1614'.

2 Prims 1938a, p. 326; Van Damme 1985, p. 131, no. 74; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 2. Hans Haenapel (died 1608) became master of the association of cabinetmakers several times.

3 SAA, Notarial Office, Notary Adriaan De Witte, N 1175 (1591): IX, published in Van de Velde 1993a, pp. 201–2, 210–1, appendix 1. Jansen and Van Herck 1943, p. 44; Van Brabant 1972, p. 223, no. 38; Van Damme 1985, vol. 2, pp. 125–6; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 15.

4 SAA, Notarial Office, Notary Adriaan De Witte, N 1175 (1591): XXXIV, published in Van de Velde 1993a, pp. 202, 211–3, appendix 2.

5 Prims 1939a, p. 362; Duverger 1984, pp. 377–8; Duverger 1992, p. 253; Van de Velde 1993b, p. 193; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 2.

Cat. 33

Peeter Neeffs I

Cathedral Interior with White Catafalque, c. 1640

Oil on panel, 41.5 × 64.5 cm, signed on column to right 'PEETER/ NEEffS'

Private collection, Brussels

INSCRIPTIONS

Three red seals on the reverse; FDB mark (François de Bout I, active from 1637 to 1660).[1]

PROVENANCE

Collection Renaudin Paris; Galerie Charpentier Paris, 30 May 1951, lot 30; Drouot, Paris, 30 September 1985, lot 61; Drouot, Paris, 27 June 1989, lot 61.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 296, M-0711.

NOTES

1 Van Damme 1990, pp. 220–1; Wadum 1998, p. 188.

Cat. 34

Peeter Neeffs I

Interior of the Cathedral, 1647

Oil on panel, 35.6 × 52 cm, signed and dated centre right on column 'PEETER NEEffS 1647'

Private collection, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

PROVENANCE

Sir Henry H. Howorth, London; Christie's, London, 14 December 1923, lot 115; acquired by Borenius; Christie's, London, 13 December 1996, lot 37.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 288, M-0665.

Fig. 1
Infrared reflectography, Brussels, KIK/IRPA

The painting has been executed on a high-quality oak panel. A monogram on the reverse, stamped twice in relief with the initials 'LS', indicates that the panel was manufactured by Antwerp panel-maker Lambrecht Steens II (active 1640–51).[1] The front of the panel has been carefully smoothed down and prepared with a white ground, most likely chalk bound with animal glue. This has been followed by a streaky grey imprimatura applied evenly with a stiff brush in a horizontal direction. This layer would have offered a lively but neutral tone on which to work and can be glimpsed in places through the thin paint. The artist then established an elaborate one-point perspective framework for the church interior, the central vanishing point indicated by a pin. The incision for this can still be made out in the left archway of the choir screen. From this central point, neatly ruled lines, clearly visible in infrared reflectography (fig. 1), radiate outwards in every direction, setting arcades, galleries and clerestories in the same ordered structure. Ruled lines also indicate the verticals and horizontals of piers and arches. Working freehand, the artist then used the same drawing material, probably graphite, to indicate in pointed arches and other architectural details. The underdrawing includes no outlines for the sculptures; indeed, the artist seems to have been primarily concerned with the architectural framework.

Neeffs's painting style is smooth and precise, with delicate highlights picking out the architectural features. The scene is enlivened by the later addition of figures and dogs, which have been applied directly on the finished cathedral interior. These are painted in a looser, more animated style than the somewhat formulaic architectural setting, and have been dated to around 1690.

Christina Currie

NOTES

1 Van Damme 1990, pp. 207–10.

Cat. 35

Isaak van Nickelen

Interior of the Cathedral, 1668

Oil on canvas, 58.4 × 68 cm, signed and dated below the sitting beggar 'ISAAC VAN/ NICKELE/ 1668'

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, inv. 82

PROVENANCE

Possibly from the collection of Edward King (died 1807), via Susanna King, Edward King's widow (died 1820); Anne Windsor, Countess of Plymouth (died 1850), bequeathed to Augustus Arthur Vansittart, by whom donated in 1864.

LITERATURE

Earp 1902, pp. 144, 146; Jantzen 1910 (1979), pp. 91, 168, no. 381; Gerson 1960, p. 93, fig. 43; Antwerp 2009 (Rockox House); Maillet 2012, p. 354, M-1057.

In 1668, Isaak van Nickelen (Haarlem 1633–1703 Haarlem) painted an especially interesting interior of the cathedral, presenting a splendid view of the altars on the right of the nave. It depicts the cathedral as seen through the eyes of someone from the Northern Netherlands, recognisable and yet quite different. Despite the presence of numerous marble altars against the columns, the interior appears far more austere owing to the pale greyish-sepia choice of colouration and, in particular, because the nave walls lack any blind tracery. Isaak van Nickelen was clearly influenced by his Mennonite background and held a view of Antwerp's cathedral different from that of his fellow artists from the Southern Netherlands. That notwithstanding, this painting is an excep-

tional resource for the study of guild and trades altars in the third quarter of the seventeenth century.

Isaak Jansz. van Nickelen enrolled as a painter at Haarlem's Guild of St Luke on 7 October 1659, but he was chiefly active as a silkworker and glassworker. The subjects of his works were principally Haarlem's St Bavo's Church (Sint-Bavokerk) and Nieuwe Kerk, as observed from a variety of viewpoints.[1] No records have been preserved concerning any visits to Antwerp, but the city is likely to have been a regular business haunt for him and a place where he would have taken the opportunity to paint a few interiors. This would explain why, besides this interior of the cathedral, he also painted an interior of St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk) around 1669 (cat. 40).

By 1668, barring a few exceptions, most of the Renaissance altars in the cathedral had been replaced by opulent Baroque structures in colourful marble. The side panels had also been removed from most of the altarpieces at the same time. Great attention to detail is given to the Fish-vendors' Altar against the sixth column on the right of the nave: the Christ Resurrected in the crowning niche; statues of the apostles Philip and James on either side; two angels seated on the garland-embellished volutes and two small putti above the niche. All the statuary above the cornice was marbled white, while the structural elements were left as natural wood.

Isaak van Nickelen's painting also provides a highly accurate picture of the alabaster, basanite and marble altar against the fourth column on the right of the nave. The sculptors Robrecht and Jan de Nole were commissioned by the Mercers to create it in 1598.[2] The crowning section, with a niche containing a seated St Nicholas and the three children in a tub, is familiar enough from earlier interiors, but it is the white marble relief below the altarpiece that catches our eye for the first time. The Mercers' Altar was enclosed by an altar rail in black basanite, with balusters and caryatids in white marble (1653, Sebastiaan de Neve after a design by Hubert van den Eynde).[3]

This painting is also the only one in which we can see the Carpenters' Altar in the north side aisle. According to Van der Sanden, this altar was created by Sebastiaan van den Eynde (1624–1702) and dated from the period shortly after he became a master craftsman in 1661/2.[4] It was an impressive construction fashioned from black bluestone and white marble. The altarpiece was flanked by two caryatids supporting the cornice. The predella, decorated in white marble relief, was narrower than the altarpiece and, with its volutes, ran across to the pedestals of the two flanking statues. A large sculptural group of the Holy Family was placed above the apex of the altarpiece and extended up to the side-aisle vaulting. After the French Revolution, the altarpiece by Marc Antonio Garibaldi (1620–78), *The Flight into Egypt* (1651), entered Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 173).

It is somewhat astonishing to see the Coopers' monumental marble altar and altar-rail enclosure set against the second column on the right of the nave, because we know from the archives that it was only in 1671 that the Coopers' Guild had designs drawn up to replace its wooden altar of 1595 – three years after Isaak van Nickelen painted this picture – and the construction work was completed only in 1678.[5] Nevertheless, the altar corresponds in every detail to later descriptions of this structure. The predella below the altarpiece, a marble relief of *The Mystic Winepress*, flanked by two putti with Eucharistic symbols, is in fact still present in the cathedral. The only possible explanation is that Isaak van Nickelen added the staffage later, perhaps more than ten years after the architecture, which was not uncommon. There are at least two other church interiors by Isaak van Nickelen that are clearly based on St Bavo's Church in Haarlem, but with the addition of Baroque altars that never stood there.[6]

Claire Baisier

NOTES

1 Thiel-Stroman 2006, pp. 256–7.

2 Jansen and Van Herck 1943, p. 16, no. 13; Casteels 1961, pp. 106–7, 262–6, 271–2; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, pp. 15–16.

3 Geudens 1891–1904, vol. 1, p. 150; Jansen 1940, p. 121; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 3.

4 Van der Sanden 1781, PK 172/2: fol. 561; Jansen and Van Herck 1944–45, pp. 49–51, 78; Van Brabant 1974, p. 72; Baudouin 1993, p. 238; Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 18.

5 Grieten and Bungeneers 1996, p. 18.

6 Isaak van Nickelen, canvas, 50.5 × 41.9 cm, Christie's, London, 11 July 2003, lot 94 (Maillet 2012, M-1063); canvas, 42.2 × 48.8 cm, Christie's, Amsterdam, 10 November 1997, lot 34 (Maillet 2012, M-1072).

The Jesuit Church of St Charles Borromeo (Sint-Carolus Borromeuskerk)

Claire Baisier

Antwerp's Jesuit Church, built between 1614 and 1621, was one of the first major constructions in the Low Countries to adhere to the architectural language of classical antiquity. The plans were drafted by two members of the order: the architects Franciscus de Aguilon (1567–1617) and Pieter Huyssens (1577–1637).[1] In view of his friendly relations with the order, it is not inconceivable that Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) became closely involved in the design of the church, though there is no concrete evidence to support this idea.[2] Nevertheless, there is proof that Rubens had input into the sculptural decoration of the façade, the tower and some elements of the interior.[3] Various examples of his sketches are preserved in Belgium and abroad.

We know of close to 50 interiors of the St Charles Borromeo Church, 17 of which date to between 1621 – the year in which the church was consecrated – and 1718, the year in which it was almost completely ravaged. Most of these interiors are highly precious as documentary sources, not least because little remained of the church's original interior after the devastating fire of 1718 and the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773. Nowadays, only the sumptuously decorated chancel apse and the side chapels dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St Ignatius of Loyola still testify to the church's former exceptional Baroque opulence. There was every good reason for its fame as a 'marble temple'.

For almost a century, the interior of Antwerp's Jesuit Church was repeatedly depicted on canvas, and even through the medium of costly and highly appropriate materials such as marble, by such names as Hendrik van Steenwijck II, Peeter Neeffs I and II, Sebastiaen Vrancx, Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg, Anton Günther Ghering and Jacob Balthazar Peeters. The grand scale of some of the paintings – on occasion more than a metre in height and a metre and a half in width – leads one to suspect that they were commissioned, probably by the Antwerp Jesuits' numerous patrons, the Haecx family heading the list. Unsurprisingly, the Antwerp Jesuits themselves also commissioned interiors of this sort. One of the examples now at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna was purchased for 250 guilders by Joseph Rosa at the time of the Jesuit order's abolition and has remained in Vienna since 1776 (fig. 1). Admiration for the 'marble temple' can also be seen from the very early circulation of the paintings in collections both within and beyond the borders of the Southern Netherlands. For example, we know that the panel by Sebastiaen Vrancx was already part of the Viennese imperial collection before 1659 (cat. 36). In 1720 the interior was also included by Ferdinand Storffer in the pictorial inventory of the Habsburg imperial collections, where it is one of the paintings flanking the *Tower of Babel* by Pieter Bruegel I, together with an *Interior of the Cathedral* by Peeter Neeffs I (fig. 2). A canvas by Anton Günther

Ghering was in the collection of Ludwig I of Bavaria and was purchased from his estate in 1868 for the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich.[4] Moreover, a canvas by Jacob Balthazar Peeters at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen was in the Danish Royal Collection prior to 1848.[5]

The devastating fire of 1718, in which the nave and a great part of the furnishings went up in flames, including the 39 ceiling paintings by Rubens, was not only a true catastrophe for the Jesuits themselves, but was also felt as such by the whole population of Antwerp. Yet the numerous preserved paintings of interiors bear unique testimony to the former splendour of Antwerp's Jesuit Church.

Fig. 1
Anton Günther Ghering, *Interior of St Charles Borromeo Church*, 1665, oil on canvas, 113 × 141 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Inv. GG 602

Fig. 2
Ferdinand Storffer, *Neu eingerichtetes Inventarium der Kayl. Bilder Gallerie in der Stallburg*, Vol. I, Fol. 10 and 11, 1720, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

NOTES

1 For further reading, see Snaet 2000, pp. 43–66.

2 Fremantle 1959, pp. 128–30; Blunt 1977, pp. 617–18.

3 Antwerpen, Rijksarchief (State Archives in Antwerp), Fonds Jezuïeten (Jesuit Section), Vlaamse provincie (Flemish provinces), no. L 993, *Litterae Annuae* (1621–5), fol. 13–4. Jaffé 1956, p. 314; Baudouin 1971; Baudouin 1983, pp. 13–56.

4 Anton Günther Ghering, *Interior of St Charles Borromeo Church*, 1663, oil on canvas, 83 × 96 cm, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, inv. 7677. Van den Branden 1883, vol. 3, p. 56; Stroe 2000, p. 180.

5 Jacob Balthazar Peeters, *Interior of St Charles Borromeo Church*, 1712, oil on canvas, 72 × 91 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, inv. KMSst137. Stroe 2000, pp. 179–80, fig. 109.

Cat. 36

Sebastiaen Vrancx

Interior of St Charles Borromeo Church, c. 1630

Oil on panel, 52 × 70.7 cm, signed on the socle of the column on the left 'S. Vrancx'

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna, inv. GG 1051

PROVENANCE

In the Viennese imperial collection since 1659; Kunsthistoriches Museum.

LITERATURE

Vienna 1783, p. 101, no. 32; Berger 1883, no. 98; Vienna 1884, no. 1374; Frimmel 1895, p. 61; Vienna 1963, no. 410; Jantzen 1910 (1979), p. 239, no. 587; Bernt 1980, no. 1426; Härting 1983, pp. 32, 37; Van de Velde 1987, p. 259; Vienna 1991, p. 133, no. 475 (as Vrancx); Antwerp 1993, p. 113, fig. 70 (as Peeter Neeffs I); Boston and Toledo 1993, p. 118, fig. 14; Babina 1996 (as Vrancx); Ulm 1996, pp. 52, 244; Vienna 2004: p. 238, fig. 1; Baisier 2008, pp. 66–90, 303–5.

We can deduce from the furnishings that this interior was painted around 1630. The four statues of saints in the choir niches are not yet in place. As is usually the case, we see above the high altar *The Miracles of St Ignatius*, one of the two altarpieces by Peter Paul Rubens. A Jesuit father is celebrating Mass, assisted by an acolyte. Numerous ladies and gentlemen are attending Mass, kneeling at some ten or so wooden kneelers. The Habsburg coat of arms graces the semi-dome in the apse; today, we would see the IHS monogram instead. Standing on the high altar is the ebony tabernacle donated in 1627 by the Haecx sisters, which can also be seen in an interior by Hendrik van Steenwijck II dated 1627.[1] The communion rail is made of wood and consists of a simple balustrade. The side aisles contain four confessionals ranged on either side of the side chapels. The central confessionals have triangular pediments, while those at each end have a half-moon.

The oak panel is undated but has been signed 'S. Vrancx' on the socle of the first column on the left. In the opinion of some authors, the signature might relate only to the staffage, the architecture being attributed to Peeter Neeffs I. However, such an attribution is not tenable without any evidence of a stylistic or technical nature.[2] When two or more artists collaborate on a painting, its completion undergoes several phases. The first phase sees the incorporation of the architectural details without leaving behind any gaps. Examples exist of such unpopulated church interiors.[3] In the second phase the interior is populated by another artist referred to as the figure painter. Usually after a number of years the under layer of paint re-emerges through the figures, but detailed examination shows that this has not occurred here. If anything, the figures have been perfectly integrated within the architecture, which indicates that a single painter was responsible for both aspects.

In fact, the architecture shows traits typical of Sebastiaen Vrancx: on the one hand, relative faithfulness and accuracy in relation to the topography,[4] and on the other, a certain weakness in conveying the more exacting aspects of perspective. For example, it is highly characteristic of Vrancx to give a rather clumsy, flattening treatment to the curved arches below the side galleries – a clumsiness never encountered with a true church interiors specialist such as Peeter Neeffs I. That aside, the figures' style of clothing, indicating French influences such as in the women's wider lace collars and décolletage, ties in well with a date of around 1630, based on historical data concerning the building's construction and the chronology of its furnishings and altars. When seen from that perspective, it is also clear that this is a coherent work executed by one hand – in this case, that of Vrancx.

Claire Baisier and Joost Vander Auwera

NOTES

1 Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Interior of St Charles Borromeo Church*, 1627, oil on panel, 42 × 41.5 cm, signed and dated H.V.S./1627, Sotheby's, London, 26 April 2001, lot 57.

2 Antwerp 1993, p. 113, fig. 70.

3 Hendrick Aerts, *A Capriccio of St John Lateran*, oil on canvas, 99.5 × 129 cm, collection of Mrs A. Roodenburg-Van der Endt, Haarlem; Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Church Interior in the Evening*, oil on panel, 123 × 174 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 1865.

4 See Baisier 2008.

Cat. 37

Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg

Interior of St Charles Borromeo Church, 1668

Oil on marble, 97.5 × 103 cm, signed on pilaster at entrance to the Lady Chapel
'W.S. van Ehrenberg fec. 1668'

Rubenshuis, Antwerp, inv. RH.S.189

PROVENANCE

Christie's, Laren (The Netherlands), Mrs B.S. Quarles van Ufford-Schuurbeque Boeye and others, 2 April 1979, lot 368; P. & L. Verheijen, 's-Gravenwezel, 14th Ghent Fair 1980; donated by APRA to the City of Antwerp in 1980.

LITERATURE

Baudouin 1981, figs. 1–2 (detail of signature); Huvenne 1988, p. 143; Antwerp 1993, p. 64, fig. 33; Babina 1996; Toronto 2001, p. 11, fig. 1. Included among the Listed Masterpieces of the Flemish Community. See also Seifertová 2007.

Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg (Germany c.1637–c.1676 Antwerp) had a particular predilection for the Jesuit Church, which he depicted as many as 15 times on panel or large-scale canvas between 1661 and 1668. What makes this interior so special is that Ehrenberg painted it on Carrara marble, leaving the white marble lower levels of the church unpainted – and there is much of that: the white sections of the floor, the columns at ground-floor level and the galleries, the communion rail and the walls of the chancel, the cladding of the side-aisle walls and the entrance to the Houtappel Chapel. Unlike other interiors of the Jesuit Church, here there is little to be seen in the way of furnishings. We are missing many of the paintings and decorative features that can be seen in the other interiors, their existence confirmed by archive records. Even the 39 ceiling paintings that Peter Paul Rubens designed in 1620 for the side aisles and galleries can barely be discerned among the columns. Quite clearly, the emphasis was on the untold wealth of materials that were used in the construction of the church, against which the rest paled into insignificance.

From the outset, the side aisles had been clad along their whole length in wooden wainscoting, with confessionals reserved for women downstairs and for men upstairs in the galleries, as can be verified in the *Littera Annua* of 1621 and in the *Historia Domus Professae*, two important documentary sources on the history of Antwerp's Jesuits.[1] This fact did not escape Ehrenberg's attention: to the upper right some men are leaning over the balustrade, while below them ladies are waiting their turn next to the confessionals. The original confessionals, on view in early interiors by the likes of Vrancx, underwent substantial adjustments in around 1655 on the arrival of 14 marble reliquary niches placed just above the wainscoting. It was most probably this that spelled the end for the confessionals' triangular and segmented pediments.

As can be seen from the oldest depictions of the interior, large paintings with populated landscapes were originally hung above the confessionals, perhaps showing scenes from the lives of the order's founders, Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier. In 1655, these historicised landscapes had to make way for marble reliquary niches in which silver reliquary caskets were placed, each containing the body of one of 13 saints retrieved from the catacombs in Rome.[2] One of these reliquary caskets – that of St Rufina – was made from solid silver and cost the princely sum of 6,000 guilders, a magnificent gift from the Houtappel sisters.[3] The reliquary niches were closed off by small double doors painted by Antoon Goubau (1616–98); however, the caskets could be viewed by the general public on particular feast days. All of this was destroyed by the fire of 1718.

The pulpit (1627) was donated by Anna and Elisabeth Haecx – devout sisters from a wealthy Antwerp family – and was described precisely in the *Littera Annua* of 1627 and 1628, and in the *Historia Domus Professae*.[4] It is one of the very earliest Baroque pulpits in which both the speaking platform of the pulpit proper and the sounding board above it were supported by figures. On a square base in cross formation, four life-sized angels with outstretched arms and wings support the octagonal pulpit. The four narrow sides of the pulpit are decorated with the symbols of the four Evangelists interlaced with garlands; the four other sides show busts in high relief of St Ignatius and St Francis Xavier. The large sounding board is borne up by two angels standing on the stairway. In the view of the Jesuits' contemporary historian, the pulpit, despite its size, gave an impression of elegance and majesty that was entirely in harmony with the rest of the 'marble temple'. Three thousand guilders were paid for the whole piece, the same price that was paid to Rubens for his two altarpieces at the high altar. Four different altarpieces were displayed in turn above the marble high altar – in this case we see Rubens's *The Miracles of St Ignatius of Loyola* (now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

Claire Baisier

NOTES

1 Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, Provincia Flandro-Belgica, 4 I Epp. Gen. (1620–30), fol. 178: 12 June 1621, letter from General Muzio Vitelleschi to Pater Jacobus Tirinus, provost of Antwerp's Professed House; Antwerpen, Rijksarchief (State Archives in Antwerp), Fonds Jezuïeten (Jesuit Section), Vlaamse jezuïetenprovincie (Flemish Jesuit province), no. L 993, *Litterae Annuae* (1621–5), fol. 12.

2 *De orden ende bediedtsel van de solemnele processie tot de kercke van het professie-huys der Societeyt Jesu, binnen Antwerpen den 5 Julii 1655*, Antwerp, 1655, A2.

3 Droeshout 1562–1773, vol. 33, Maison professe III (1640–64), fol. 353; Geudens 1922, pp. 1–2.

4 Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu, Provincia Flandro-Belgica 56 Hist. (1611–42), *Appendix Historiae Domus Professorum Societatis Jesu Antverpiensis*: fol. 66r-v; Antwerpen, Rijksarchief (State Archives in Antwerp), Fonds Jezuïeten (Jesuit Section), Vlaamse jezuïetenprovincie (Flemish Jesuit province), *Historia domus professae Antverpiensis* (1562–1695), manuscript 965–8: fol. 52r; Antwerpen, Rijksarchief, Fonds Jezuïeten, Vlaamse provincie, letters from the Provincial Superior of the Province Flandro-Belgica to the General (1626–33), no. L 994: fol. 62, 102; Droeshout 1562–1773, vol. 32, *Maison professe II* (1622–39), fol. 272–3 (1627).

St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk)

Claire Baisier

This Late Gothic collegiate church, built between 1506 and 1656, is the largest church in Antwerp after the Cathedral of Our Lady and has a particularly splendid interior with 23 Renaissance and Baroque altars, as well as the burial chapel of Peter Paul Rubens. During the period under French rule in the late eighteenth century, the church was one of the few to be spared looting and ransacking, all thanks to the then rector, Mortelmans, who declared himself in agreement with republican ideals. As far as we know, only 13 seventeenth-century interiors of this renowned church have survived to the present day.

We have Sebastiaen Vrancx and Peeter Neeffs I to thank for the oldest interior views of St James's Church. The drawing and painting attributed to Sebastiaen Vrancx show the church depicted from the viewpoint of the north side aisle (cat. 38). Owing to its unusual perspective, the composition offers us a unique glimpse of several of the church's components that remain out of sight in other interiors. This includes an exceptional view of the original condition of the Chapel of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekapel), in which the altar was situated in the bay next to the sanctuary, at the starting point of the later ambulatory. The work can be dated to between 1625 – the year in which part of the barrier to the Hallowed Chapel (Venerabelkapel) was moved to St Anne's Chapel (Sint-Annakapel) – and 1639, the year in which the alabaster statue of St Paul was installed to the left of the first column on the right of the nave.[1]

In about 1640, Peeter Neeffs I produced an intriguing interior of St James's Church showing a cleric with a finely dressed girl aged around eight in the foreground (fig. 1). The two figures take up almost the whole left half of the painting, leaving the nave and south side aisle in view on the right-hand side.[2] It has been suggested that this relates to Abbot Cesare Alessandro Scaglia (1592–1641), known from his portrait by Anthony van Dyck. More plausibly, the painting may in fact show a rector or curate attached to St James's Church, possibly with a young sister he was bringing up himself. Other paintings by Peeter Neeffs I and Peeter Neeffs II show St James's Church both in the evening[3] and by day.[4]

Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg occupies a prominent position in the series of interiors of St James's Church, having supplied three paintings at three-yearly intervals: 1663, 1666 and 1669.[5] Ehrenberg lived in the parish and had close ties to the church: on 5 August 1665 he married Maria Saeys, daughter of the painter and art dealer Jan Saeys, there.[6] Moreover, their sons were baptised in the church: Lucas Willem on 18 October 1666 and Peter on 6 February 1668.[7] His three interiors were intended more as promotional material for the patrons of important architectural and decorative projects in St

James's Church – the pulpit, the choir screen and the Hallowed Chapel – and rather less as a representation of the actual situation as it then was. The same is true of a Peeter Neeffs II painting made in 1653, with a view facing away from the choir screen and intended to give the potential patron an idea of the future west door, which in the end never came to fruition (fig. 2).[8]

Fig. 1
Peeter Neeffs I and Gonzales Coques, *Interior of St James's Church with Cleric and Small Girl*, oil on panel, 43.2 × 70.5 cm, Shannon's Fine Art Auctioneers, October 1998

Fig. 2
Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of St James's Church looking West*, 1653, oil on panel, 44.5 × 64.5 cm, Staatliches Museum Schwerin, inv. G 381

NOTES

1 Andries Colyns de Nole, donated in 1639 by Cornelis Lantschot. See Van Lerius 1855, pp. 178–9; Collection of the epitaphs and commemorative texts 1863: 168; Casteels 1961, p. 199; Antwerp 1927, p. 25.

2 Peeter Neeffs I and Gonzales Coques, *Interior of St James's Church with Cleric and Small Girl*, oil on panel, 43.2 × 70.5 cm, Shannon's Fine Art Auctioneers, Milford, CT, October 1998.

3 Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of St James's Church in the Evening*, oil on panel, 50 × 64 cm, signed 'PEETER NEEFFS 16.' on the first column to the right, J.L. Menke (Antwerp) sale, Heberle, Cologne, 27 October 1890, lot 59; Peeter Neeffs I and Frans Francken II, *Interior of St James's Church in the Evening*, oil on copper, 13.4 × 18 cm, Christie's, London, 22 January 2009, lot 553.

4 Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of St James's Church*, oil on canvas, 50.2 × 65.4 cm, signed 'DEN AVDEN/NEEffS', Sotheby's, London, 6 December 2012, lot 341; Peeter Neefs II and Jan van den Hecke I, *Interior of St James's Church*, 1659, material unknown, 57.5 × 81.9 cm, Christie's, London, 15 June 1984, lot 124.

5 Willem von Ehrenberg, *Interior of St James's Church looking East, with Baptism*, 1663, oil on canvas, 83 × 119 cm, Sotheby's, London, 3 July 1946, lot 139; Willem von Ehrenberg, *Interior of the Hallowed Chapel*, 1666, oil on canvas, 102.9 × 121.9 cm, Terrell, Robinson & Fisher, London, 12 December 1935, lot 126; Willem von Ehrenberg and Victor Honoré Janssens, *View of the Rood Screen in St James's Church*, 1669, oil on canvas, 56 × 78 cm, Musée Municipal, Bergues, Ancien Mont-de-Piété, inv. P/VER. 42.

6 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 394.

7 SAA, Parish Registers, PR 53, baptismal register St James's Church, Antwerp (Sint-Jacobskerk): 18 October 1666 and 6 February 1668; Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 394.

8 Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of St James's Church looking West,* 1653, oil on panel, 44.5 × 64.5 cm, Staatliches Museum Schwerin, inv. G 381, signed 'Peeter Neeffs 1653' on the first column to the right. See Claire Baisier in *Simiolus* 38, 2015–16, pp. 173–84: 'Seventeenth-century paintings of Antwerp church interiors as promotional material for architectural and decorative projects'.

Cat. 38

Sebastiaen Vrancx

Interior of St James's Church, Antwerp, c. 1632–39

Brush in greyish-brown, underdrawing in graphite on paper, 28.2 × 20.2 cm

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-T-1897-A-3348

PROVENANCE

Acquired by the museum in 1897.

LITERATURE

Bernt 1957–58, no. 69.

Fig. 1
Sebastiaen Vrancx, *Interior of the Church of the Discalced Carmelites*, 1647, oil on canvas, 82 × 118.5 cm, Lempertz, Cologne, 15 May 1999, lot 1175

Although the drawing at the Rijksmuseum is catalogued as by the Northern Netherlands architectural painter Daniel de Blieck (Middelburg c. 1610–1673)[1] and has been included as a reference work in Walther Bernt's standard work, my wholehearted support goes to Dr Claire Baisier's suggestion that Sebastiaen Vrancx was the true author of the piece.[2] Identification of the interior as that of St James's Church[3] in Antwerp adds even more weight to her recognition of an Antwerp painter's hand.[4] The eye for architectural detail, the fine penmanship of the lines, the doll-like figures, the concisely executed facial features, the attention to clothing and anecdotal elements (such as the young fellow begging in the foreground) are all typical of Vrancx. Moreover, this is a very attractive work and a new discovery to add to his oeuvre as a draughtsman. By happy coincidence, a Vrancx painting for which this drawing clearly served as a preliminary study recently surfaced at auction and has been loaned to the exhibition by the new owner (cat. 39). Both these works by Vrancx can now be viewed here together for the first time and discussed in relation to each other.

In her doctoral thesis and on the basis of architectural history, Claire Baisier dated the painting – then documented only photographically – to between 1625 and 1639. The style of both the drawing and the painting allow for further specification. The drawing's confident, dynamic use of line, particularly notable in its figures, bears close similarities to a drawing monogrammed by Vrancx at the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Brunswick.[5] That drawing was in its turn a preliminary study for *The Prodigal Son among the Courtesans*, the second tableau from a series of four paintings showing the story of the Prodigal Son, formerly in the collection of L. Meeûs in Brussels. The first of these painted tableaux, *The Departure of the Prodigal Son*, was monogrammed and dated 1632. The painting's style, including a number of somewhat monumental figures, clear outlines and large enclosed areas of colour, is characteristic of Vrancx's later work. This idiom can also be seen in a picture he painted and dated in the year of his death (1647), the unique *Interior in the Church of the Discalced Carmelites in Antwerp* (fig. 1). Since the present drawing clearly preceded the painting for which it was a preliminary study, the most probable date for the creation of both drawing and painting is between around 1632 and 1639. However, we consider implausible the hypothesis put forward in the 2016 auction catalogue that the man with a plumed hat standing against a column on the far right is a self-portrait of Vrancx himself, based on Van Dyck's oil study of him for his famous *Iconographia*.[6] We feel that the facial features in that portrait study are far more specific.

As much as a third of the architectural height in the drawing is missing from the painting. This is despite the full retention the church interior's width and the systematic, detailed elaboration of the lower section of the drawing in the painting. It is in this uppermost omitted section of the drawing that we most clearly perceive weaknesses in the perspectival accuracy of the vaulting, as well as in the round and Gothic arches. The central axis and the recession of the arches have been rendered with greater hesitancy and not wholly convincingly. Faults of this type are typical of Vrancx and can also be discerned in, for example, his interior of Antwerp's Jesuit Church at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (cat. 36). What is true is that Vrancx had a keen eye for detail in his paintings of interiors.[7] There are systematic differences between the drawing and the painting since

many of the components in his preliminary study were elaborated upon in detail in the painting, such as the diamond-shaped hatchment against the column in the foreground. However, he was not a true architectural specialist. This tends to lead us to the conclusion that it was Vrancx himself who restricted his painted composition to the part in which his qualities would outweigh his weaknesses. And there is no question that in this case he was able to elaborate upon his preliminary study to his heart's content, producing a painting that conveys an especially fresh, animated and colourful depiction of architecture and staffage.

Joost Vander Auwera

NOTES

1 It is not wholly inexplicable that this drawing should have been attributed to De Blieck, because works in his name, such as the *Church Interior* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Reims, provide a similar vertical and lateral perspective in their treatment of church naves. Moreover, it is a viewpoint uncommon among Southern Netherlands painters of church interiors, and thus strikes one automatically as from the Northern Netherlands. The question remains about the source of Vrancx's inspiration, given that he preceded De Blieck by a generation. We suspect that his inspiration came from his collaboration with Bartholomeus van Bassen on church interiors: see cat. 32 from 1616, which displays yet another unusual viewpoint. Furthermore, Van Bassen monogrammed and dated in 1617 a view of Antwerp's Jesuit Church which adopts a similar viewpoint to this drawing and painting by Vrancx (auctioned in London, Sotheby's, 26 April 2001, lot 57, oil on panel, 42 × 41.5 cm). In terms of style and the interior details depicted, Vrancx's drawing can be dated later than 1617, which would tie in logically with Van Bassen having been his source of inspiration.

2 Email message to the author, received 13.10. 2015.

3 Identified as such in Claire Baisier's doctoral thesis. The digital catalogue at the Rijksmuseum places a question mark next to this identification of the church.

4 However, this argument can be challenged, because Northern Netherlands painters such as Bartholomeus van Bassen also made paintings of church interiors in Antwerp (see cat. 32) and must also have resided in Antwerp.

5 Pen in grey, brown wash, 304 × 427 mm. A photograph can be viewed in the KIK-IRPA Balat-photographic database under no. B 113 903.

6 Oil on panel, 23.5 × 15.6 cm, The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Boughton House, Northamptonshire. See Barnes, De Poorter, Millar and Vey 2004, p. 373, cat. III. 166, in which some doubt is expressed about Van Dyck's authorship.

7 In her doctoral thesis, Dr Claire Baisier praises Vrancx's relatively high degree of faithfulness when rendering detail.

Cat. 39

Sebastiaen Vrancx

Interior of St James's Church, Antwerp, c. 1632–39

Oil on panel, 50.5 × 59.1 cm

Private collection, Manhattan Beach, California

PROVENANCE

Galerie Giroux, Brussels, 3–5 May 1927, lot 361 (as Vrancx); held by a private collector c. 1990 and afterwards by that collector's heirs; Christie's, New York, 14 April 2016, lot 108.

LITERATURE

Maillet 2012, p. 510, M-O-1997; Baisier 2008, vol. I, pp. 144–52.

Cat. 40

Isaak van Nickelen

Interior of St James's Church, 1670/2

Oil on canvas, 55.5 × 41 cm, signed below left on the column: 'J.V. / Nickel…'

Staatliches Museum Schwerin/Ludwigslust/Güstrow, inv. G 3892

PROVENANCE

Neumeister Munich, 29 June 1994, lot 432; Christoph Müller collection, Tübingen; donated to Staatliches Museum Schwerin, 2013.

LITERATURE

Ulm 1996, no. 23; Emden 2010, pp. 81–4; Leipzig 2010 need ref; Seelig 2013, pp. 204–5.

There are no archive records of Isaak van Nickelen having visited Antwerp, but the existence of this interior of St James's Church as well as an interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady dated 1668 (cat. 35) would seem to confirm that he did indeed do so. In fact, Isaak van Nickelen painted a second, somewhat imaginary interior of St James's Church seen from a completely different perspective, using the nave as his vantage point.[1]

In the case of the present interior, the artist took up position in the second bay in the south side aisle, standing almost against the enclosing marble altar rail of St Anne's Chapel (Sint-Annakapel). This allowed him to take in part of the choir screen (left) and the wooden screen at the entrance to the south ambulatory, with the door to the great sacristy visible in the far distance. This painting is also the only one to show at close quarters the monument honouring the Holy Trinity (1653, Artus I Quellinus), which is set against the first column on the right of the nave (fig. 1). Framed in black marble, a finely detailed relief shows God the Father and His son Jesus Christ, with the dove of the Holy Spirit between them. A smaller, horizontal relief below this shows *The Vision of St John of Matha*. Just as today, the flanking cherubs and the braziers above were fully gilded. Since then, there has been the loss of the church wardens' oak pew which girdled the massive crossing pier. This was where the church council sat when attending Mass, which was conducted daily at the altar on the right of the choir screen. This piece of furniture can be seen in every painting of the interior, but never in closer proximity. In position against the same pier, but facing the nave and level with the capital, we see the alabaster statue of St Paul which Andries Colyns de Nole (1598–1639) sculpted in 1639 for the memorial to Cornelis Lantschot.[2]

Fig. 1
Artus Quellinus I, *Monument in Honour of the Holy Trinity*, 1653

By the time that Isaak van Nickelen came to paint this interior, the finishing touches had already been made to the marble choir screen, including a black and white marble balustrade above, the commission for which was placed with the sculptor Peeter Cautyns as late as 6 November 1669.[3] The only elements missing from this picture are the six pedestals with copper candelabra, which were added in 1672 by Cautyns and the stonemason Grieger.[4] Therefore, it is possible to date this interior fairly precisely to between 1670 and 1672. The figures were added perhaps some 20 years later.

Claire Baisier

NOTES

1 Canvas, 31 × 31 cm, Christie's, New York, 15 January 1985, lot 109 (Maillet 2012, M-1111).

2 Van Lerius 1855, pp. 178–9; Collection of the Epitaphs and Commemorative Texts 1863: 168; Casteels 1961, p. 199; Antwerp 1927, p. 25.

3 SAA, Notariaat (Notary's Practice), Notary Jan Van Nos, N 4274, fol. 353r-v: 6 November 1669, church wardens' contract with stonemason Peeter Cautyns for the completion of the choir screen by Christmas, in particular the balustrade, for the sum of 800 guilders and a further 25 guilders thereafter (Published in Jansen 1940, p. 134, no. 19; Steenmeijer 1997, vol. IIIb, pp. 147–8). Van Lerius 1855, p. 181; Antwerp 1927, p. 25; Steppe 1952, p. 377.

4 ASJ church wardens' archives, old no. 111, Documents on sculptures/carvings, stained-glass windows, paintings, etc. (1515–1850), no. 24: 16 October 1672, banker's draft of 16 guilders for the sculptor Peeter Cautyns for the six pedestals for the choir screen; 22 October 1672, banker's draft of 16 guilders for the stonemason Grieger for the same feet (published in Steenmeijer op. cit., p. 149).

St George's Church (Sint-Joriskerk)

Claire Baisier

The parish of St George was one of the oldest in Antwerp, initially situated outside the city walls. Although the church had acquired its final layout of two side aisles, a transept and an extended choir by around 1500, there are indications that a St George's Chapel existed on the site as long ago as the thirteenth century. The Gothic church was demolished in 1799 and replaced in the nineteenth century by the present Neo-Gothic church. An eighteenth-century ground plan in *Descriptions of the Monastery Churches, Altars, Memorials, Paintings and Statuary and of Other Curiosities in the City of Antwerp* provides a clear picture of the size and design of the former church (fig. 1).

The discovery of three works depicting the interior of the former St George's Church has significantly advanced our understanding of this lost building. These are: the painting by Peeter Neeffs I on show in this exhibition (cat. 41); a second, somewhat larger version (which differs only in terms of the staffage)(fig. 2) and third painting with a slightly altered composition, signed by Peeter Neeffs II and dated 1659.[1]

The three interiors were all painted from a high vantage point on the right of the nave. They afford a view of the whole nave, the Lady Chapel in the left foreground, the sanctuary and part of the transept. The side aisles and the transept are more clearly visible in the paintings by Peeter Neeffs I than they are in the one by his son, allowing the side altars to be seen in full. It is as if Peeter Neeffs I had opened out the church widthways to make more elements visible. As a result, the vaulting depicted in the side aisles is rather distorted. The arches between the bays are more rounded than pointed and the four vault ribs have been incorrectly drawn. Another point of note is the absence of cabbage-leaf capitals crowning the columns along the nave, despite the fact that they appear clearly in all other interiors of St George's Church, both in the painting by Peeter Neeffs II dated 1659 and in three eighteenth-century interiors. A further anomaly is the appearance of a belfry hatch in the transept vaulting despite the absence then of any bell tower at the crossing of nave and transept in St George's Church.

The three bays in the transept, as well as the Lady Chapel and Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, were narrower than the four bays in the side aisles, causing part of the transept wall to project into the side aisles. A small altar stood against each of these narrow walls: one on the north side dedicated to St Anianus, patron saint of cobblers, and one in the south side aisle dedicated to the Blessed Name of Jesus. The choir screen was not in its customary position between the transept and choir but further to the east, situated between the first and second bays of the choir on a dais with a flight of three steps. Construction of the Renaissance choir screen was one of the major projects undertaken at St George's Church following the destruction of the Iconoclastic Fury. Otmaer van Ommen was commissioned in 1588 to create the wooden choir screen and triumphal cross,[2] and they were marbled once again in 1656.[3] The choir screen consisted of a lower level with three arches supported by four pillars, with a gallery above consisting of a solid balustrade with a row of balusters running along the screen's whole length. The two arches on either side of the central gateway were openwork structures with fine copper balusters. The choir organ, built between 1563 and 1565 by organ maker Gillis Brebos, is also in view. The old organ-case was retained and repainted in polychrome, while its new shutters featured paintings of the biblical King David and mythological Orpheus.[4]

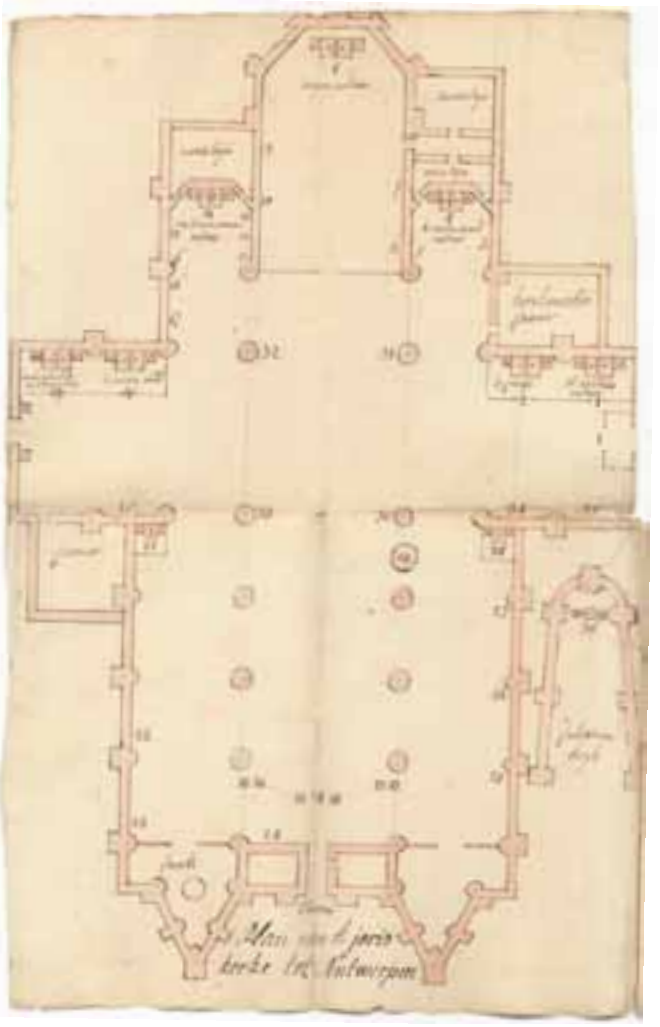


Fig. 1
Floor plan of St George's Church, Municipal Archives, Antwerp, inv. PK.197

Fig. 2
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of St George's Church looking East*, oil on canvas, 52 × 67 cm, signed 'PEETER NEEffS', Christie's, London, 12 January 1994, lot 109

The pulpit on the right of the nave, dating from 1610, consisted of a simple octagonal platform decorated with small statues of saints in recesses. A staircase wound around the column to provide access to the pulpit from the side. A sounding board was attached to the column using wrought-iron staves.[5] This was replaced in 1674 by an opulent sounding board, made by Artus Quellin II (1625–1700).[6]

Not present in the painting is the memorial in black and white marble to the painter Jan Snellinck (1544–1638), his wife Paulina Cuypers and their son Andreas. It was sculpted by Jan van den Cruys in 1657 and placed diagonally opposite the pulpit.[7] Therefore, a plausible date for this painting by Peeter Neeffs I would appear to lie somewhere between the marbling of the choir screen in 1656 and the installation of the memorial to Jan Snellinck in 1657.

NOTES

1 Peeter Neeffs II, *Interior of St George's Church looking East*, 1659, oil on canvas, 58.5 × 82.5 cm, signed 'Peeter/ Neeffs / 1659' on the column to the right, Sotheby's, New York, auction N01752, 29 January 2005, lot 46.

2 RAA, St George's Church Archives, no. 22, Church Accounts, 1588–1608: [1588–90] '*Betaelt aen Mr. Otmarius Ommen in diversce p[ar]tijen, over het contrackt met hem ghemaeckt, van het crucifix met de beelden, als oock de selve te stofferen, ende stellen, met oock het werck van het geheel ocsael te maecken, soo met stoffe ende aerbeijt al tsaemen XIIIc XXIX gl.*'.

3 RAA, St George's Church Archives, no. 14, Accounts Ledger, 1654–76: [21 October 1656] '*Den 21 8ber betaelt aen Michiel van Ernen marbel schilder woonende tot Rotterdam voor het schilderen van docxael ... gl. 284*'; RAA, Inventories of the St George's Church Archives, no. 36, Accounts Ledger, 1631–77, fol. 179v: [21 October 1656] '*Adij 21 8ber aen Michiel van Erven voor marbelen het oxael … 284*'.

4 Prims 1924, p. 121; Stellfeld 1942, p. 25.

5 RAA, St George's Church Archives, no. 24, Accounts Ledger, 1607–22: [1610] '*Item betaelt aen Hans Houwers over een nieuwe precstoel met eenen wendel trap ende met sijn siraet als blijckt bij sijn rekeninghe ende quitantie tsamen … 90 gl. 5 st.*'. Prims 1924, p. 215; Jansen and Van Herck 1958, p. 14, cat. 24.

6 De Bosschère 1910, p. 144; Prims 1924, p. 365.

7 De Bosschère 1910, p. 146; Prims 1924, p. 365; Jansen 1946, p. 57; Lawrence 1982, p. 287, no. 125.

Cat. 41

Peeter Neeffs I

Interior of St George's Church, c. 1656/7

Oil on canvas, 50 × 64.5 cm, signed 'PEETER NEEffS' on the arch above first column on the left of the nave

Private collection, Germany

PROVENANCE

Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, no. 202, 10 May 1971, lot 239; Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, no. 215, 2 April 1973, lot 154; Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 1 December 2009, lot 28.

LITERATURE

Baisier 2008, pp. 161–78.

St Walburga's Church (Sint-Walburgiskerk)

Thomas Fusenig and Ulrich Heinen

Fig. 1 (detail of cat. 42)
Abel Grimmer, *Interior of St Walburga's Church*, 1608, oil on panel, 31.3 × 43 cm, Courtesy of Frye & Sohn, Münster

Fig. 2 (detail)
Ambrosius Francken, *The Sermon of St Eligius*, central panel of the triptych of the Smiths' guild, dated 1588, oil on panel, 260 × 89 cm, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp

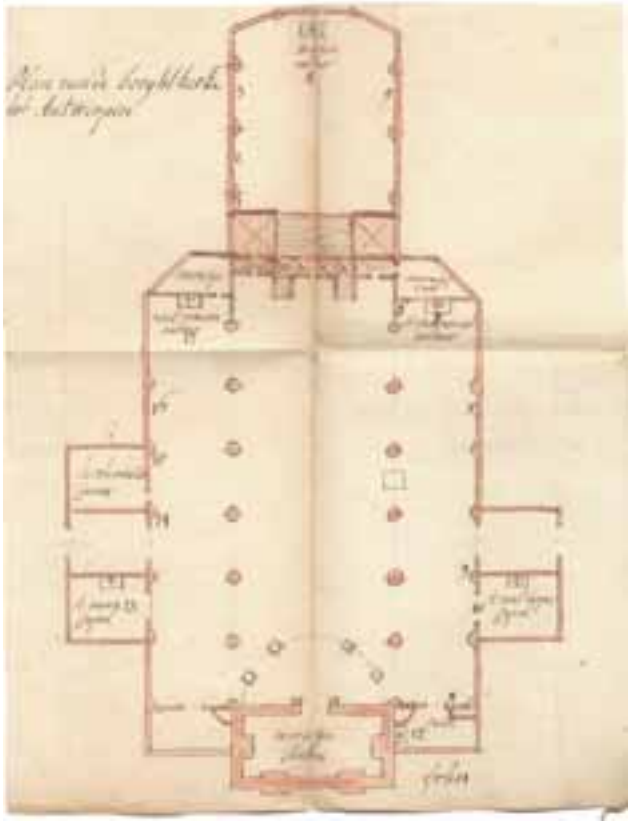


Fig. 3
Floor plan of St Walburga's Church, Municipal Archives, Antwerp, inv. PK.197

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, St Walburga's Church at the old fish market near the port of Antwerp was demolished. An annual fair was held in the square thereafter. At the end of the century, the foundation walls of the church, and with them its oldest core, disappeared when the wharves were modernised.[1] Although it has long since vanished, the church is still somewhat famous because its main altar originally held Peter Paul Rubens's *Raising of the Cross* (completed 1610–11). In 1988, Frans Baudouin discussed four paintings that show the interior of St Walburga's Church.[2] In the meantime, a series of newly discovered paintings has added to the visual documentation of the interior, and Claire Baisier has recently connected their depictions to archival sources.[3]

A painting by Abel Grimmer from 1608 (cat. 42) that became known only a few years ago is particularly important in this context.[4] Several decades later, the workshop of Peeter Neeffs produced views of the church (figs. 4–7; cat. 43). The steep staircase of St Walburga's Church is due to a particular feature of the architecture that required the choir to be unusually elevated. To judge from the relative sizes in Grimmer's depiction, it was about four metres above the level of the nave. Between 1499 and 1509, the church building in the Gothic style, which dated from the mid-thirteenth century, was expanded into a three-aisle Gothic basilica with circular piers. From the end of the fifteenth century, a series of new buildings and renovations of this type were carried out in Antwerp and its environs, primarily by the De Waghemaker family of architects. The area around Antwerp fortress, which is densely built and enclosed by a wall, did not really have room for a long Gothic choir, so for the expansion a vault was placed over Steenstraat, which was adjacent to the old apse, and the new choir built above a warehouse.[5] Because of the unrest and iconoclasm of 1566, however, this conversion was only provisionally completed in 1574, when the Bishop of Antwerp, Franciscus Sonnius (1506–76), consecrated the high altar.[6] From that time, Steenstraat ran under the choir behind a wall seen in Grimmer's picture rising up between the compound piers to the first bay of the choir on the level of the choir floor (fig. 1).[7] The doors seen in the painting, which were around a metre and a half wide, led directly to this passageway. That also explains the dark basin of holy water near the entrance seen on the left wall beneath the swallow's nest organ.[8] Beneath the staircase was a cellar with a holy sepulchre where the cross was 'buried' during the Pas-

Fig. 4
Peeter Neeffs workshop, *Interior of St Walburga's Church*, oil on canvas, 36.8 × 51.4 cm, dated 1656; Sotheby's, London, 22 February 1967, lot 6

Fig. 5
Peeter Neeffs workshop, *Interior of St Walburga's Church*, oil on canvas, 57.5 × 83 cm, signed and dated next to the right entrance: 'peeter / neeff / 165[8 or 9]'; Sotheby's, New York, 19 January 1984, lot 3

Fig. 6
Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of St Walburga's Church*, oil on panel, 33 × 48 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid, inv. 1524

sion, which the iconoclasts devastated in 1566. Not until 1613 did Cornelis van der Geest, an Antwerp art collector and friend of Rubens, have the holy sepulchre restored.[9]

The central panel of the 1588 triptych by Ambrosius Francken for the St Eligius altar of the Smiths' guild in the Cathedral of our Lady in Antwerp depicts the sermon of St Eligius. The background of the panel, which is now held in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, shows the same architecture as Grimmer's work (fig. 2).[10] According to legend, Eligius gave a sermon on the hill where St Walburga's Church would later be built. Rubens also depicts him on the wing panels of his main altarpiece.[11] In Ambrosius Francken's work, one can see a reddish-orange sphere decorating the banister that also stands out in the Grimmer. In the centre of the staircase, there is a slender banister that is also painted red. This clearly explains the delicate reddish brushstroke in the corresponding place in Grimmer's interior.

The iconoclasts who ravaged St Walburga's Church from 20 August to 8 September 1566 had probably already largely destroyed the older decorations. When the church was transferred to the Lutherans in 1581, the Catholics would likely have removed any surviving decorations for safekeeping. When the high altar and the church were re-consecrated on 3 September 1585, having been occupied by the Lutherans until August of that year, a phase of reconstruction began, though it was probably only makeshift in many respects.[12] A comparison of the decorations seen in Grimmer's painting with the later ground plan of the church is fascinating (fig. 3).

We include in this overview the various views of the church by the workshop of Peeter Neeffs, although only a few of them are dated and signed. In 1653, Peeter Neeffs II painted a view of the interior (cat. 43). There is an exact copy of this view, also dated 1653, in Dunkirk.[13] Three years later, Neeffs's workshop produced another version of the interior (fig. 4) – documented on the art market in London – that corresponds largely to the depiction of 1653.[14] Finally, a painting from 1658 that was on the market in New York in 1984 (fig. 5) also features architecture that largely corresponds to that seen in the Grimmer.[15] For the first time it is clear that a landing on the staircase after the first six steps interrupted the climb to the high altar. In keeping with the upward movement

Fig. 7
Peeter Neeffs II (attributed), *Interior of St Walburga's Church*, oil on canvas, 47 × 62 cm, signed above the door on the right 'Peter Neeffs'; Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels, inv. 1730

of the architecture, the painting dramatises the approach of the faithful to the high altar through the movement of the figures. One person is standing praying at the entrance to the holy sepulchre. Next to him two women are kneeling at the foot of the stairs; one figure has already climbed the steps, and one is striding towards the altar through the wide-open portal of the choir screen. Finally, one of the faithful is kneeling in prayer on the altar steps.

To the three dated paintings from Neeffs's workshop we can add two undated paintings already discussed by Baudouin. In the view of the interior of St Walburga's Church in the Museo del Prado in Madrid attributed to Peeter Neeffs I (fig. 6), most of the architectural details correspond to the paintings discussed thus far.[16] The stylistic evolution of Peeter Neeffs I does not permit an early date for this painting; it cannot have been produced before the late 1630s, especially since the painter of the staffage, Frans Francken III, did not become a free master until 1639/40.[17] The way the Neeffs workshop worked, which is characterised otherwise by repetitions and variations, suggests that the simpler walls of the entrance to the holy sepulchre in the Madrid picture is merely an arbitrary intervention by the architecture painter in order to simplify the execution of the painting. Another variation on St Walburga's Church, which Baudouin also introduced into the discussion, is a panel in Brussels attributed to Peeter Neeffs II for which Frans Francken III once again provided the figures (fig. 7).[18] Here an open triptych is seen on the high altar, but its subject is not recognisable. The painting has other significant variations in the design and location of several items of the decoration when compared to the Madrid interior (fig. 6) and the paintings dated 1653 (cat. 43), 1656 (fig. 4), and 1658 (fig. 5).

The most famous view of the interior of St Walburga's Church is Anton Günther Ghering's painting of 1661 (cat. 44). Like Grimmer's depiction before it, this shows the central vanishing point at human eye level, and like Grimmer's work it does not convey a clear impression of the building's scale other than through the staffage. The painting reveals profound changes in the interior when compared to Neeffs's paintings of the 1650s, as it follows renovations and alterations in 1660.[19] The choir screen, the freestanding altars and the organ have been removed. In the northern side aisle, the altar of the Virgin with no enclosing rails can just be seen between the pillars. The space of the church is oriented towards the high altar, entirely in the spirit of the Post-Tridentine liturgy.[20] The baptismal font in the centre of the nave and the richly decorated pulpit are the only freestanding elements left in the room. Undisturbed by any interruptions, the entire architectonic design now opens up in an approach from the west towards the high altar. The strong contrast in illumination between the coloured glass windows in the clerestory of the nave and the apparently nearly clear windows that flood the choir with powerful light focuses the eye more on the high altar in Ghering's painting than in Grimmer's or those of Neeffs workshop. The altar stands out as a dark mass with the suggestion of a polygonal enclosure, in front of the sparsely articulated, uniformly lit wall of the choir. The oculi in the lancet windows of the apse have been blocked in Ghering's painting, so no backlighting disturbs the view of the altar.[21] The lighting as presented in Ghering's picture must have emphasised the three-dimensional effect of the powerfully modelled bodies in Rubens's altarpiece.

The removal of all the other altars in Ghering's picture is a surprisingly radical intervention, but in view of the imprecision and arbitrariness of the Neeffs paintings, the question arises as to whether Ghering manipulated his depiction as well. It is astonishing that the organ is missing, for example.[22] Claire Baisier has also pointed out that the views into a chapel on the north side suggest a state in the first bay that only existed in the future, after 1662.[23]

In Ghering's painting, the stairway takes the horizontal progression towards the high altar that is built up in the entire space of the church and transforms it into a rising, upward movement, making us perceive the energy needed for both the actual and the spiritual ascent. In the liturgy the worshipper looks upwards towards the altar from a static viewpoint, but the architecture provokes an intensification from piety to a desire for physical ascent.[24] Based on Grimmer's painting of 1608 (cat. 42) and the six Neeffs paintings now known, all of which were produced in the 1650s or later, the chronological order proposed by Frans Baudouin based on the depictions of St Walburga's Church that were known to him can no longer be accepted entirely. The value of the paintings as sources has to be revised by a dating of Neeffs's works based on connoisseurship. Paradoxically, Abel Grimmer's painting gains additional credibility precisely because of the exceptional status of the picture in the context of his otherwise more generic architectural views. The depictions of St Walburga's Church suggest that the placement of Rubens's altarpiece in about 1610 created an orientation towards the high altar that lasted for several decades, whose ideal result was demonstrated by Ghering.[25] It remains uncertain whether Rubens consistently influenced this process, given that the development was hesitant and occurred in phases, but he did remain associated with the renovation of St Walburga's Church for decades.[26] He retouched his triptych in 1627 and reproduced it in an engraving of 1638. He dedicated that print to the recently deceased Cornelis van der Geest, who as the crucial supporter of the high altar and of the restoration of the holy sepulchre had a crucial influence on the redesign of the church.

NOTES

1 Tijs 1985; Antwerp 2011.

2 Baudouin 1985–88; Baudouin's discussion was taken up in Heinen 1996, pp. 45–6, fig. 233, notes 10–11 (with bibliography).

3 Baisier 2008, esp. vol. 1, pp. 201–38.

4 On the back of the oak panel, there is a red lacquer seal with two fish in the coat of arms – the coat of arms of the Salm-Salm family. The prior history of the painting is unknown. The estate of Cornelis Thymenssen, the chaplain of St Walburga's Church, included on 12 April 1618 'Eenen stuck schilderye olieverwe op panneel in vergulde lyste wesende eenen Tempel' (An oil painting on a panel in a gilded frame showing a temple); see Duverger 1985, no. 281, p. 11.

5 See Génard 1863, p. LXVIII; Lampo 2002, p. 71; Baisier 2008, p. 201.

6 See Génard 1863, pp. LXIX–LXX; Van Herck and Jansen 1958, pp. 5–6. On the context in the history of architecture, see Barsee 1975, pp. 361–89, esp. pp. 365–7.

7 See Acker 1975, fig. on p. 49.

8 See Baudouin 1985–88, pp. 186–7. In the view of a church interior by Peeter Neeffs in Brussels (fig. 6), daylight enters the church through the open door on the left.

9 See Génard 1863, p. LXIX. This cellar with the holy sepulchre should not be confused with the crypt, which was presumably located beneath the tower of St Walburga's Church; pp. LXXI–LXXII, note 2; see Baisier 2008, p. 205.

10 Ambrosius Francken, *The Sermon of St Eligius*, central panel of the triptych of the Smiths' guild, dated 1588, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp; Baudouin 1985–88, fig. 3; Peeters 2003, pp. 68–91, esp. p. 85, fig. 5; Baisier 2008, pp. 202–4; Antwerp 2009, cat. 7, pp. 126–33. There is also a grisaille sketch in the Catherijneconvent, Utrecht, see Utrecht 1986, p. 178, cat. 113.

11 On the veneration of St Eligius in St Walburga's Church in Antwerp, see Heinen 1996, pp. 70, 267, nos. 265–6 (with bibliography).

12 On iconoclasm and the restorations in St Walburga's Church, see not only Baisier 2008 and Génard 1863, p. LXIX, but also Prims 1943, pp. 150–1.

13 Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dunkirk, inv. BA. P.199; Baisier 2008, pp. 235–6.

14 Sotheby's, London, 22 February 1967, lot 6; Baisier 2008, pp. 213–16; Maillet 2012, M-0964.

15 Sotheby's, New York, 19 January 1984, lot 3; Baisier 2008, pp. 216; Maillet 2012, M-0962.

16 Museo del Prado, Madrid, figures by Frans Francken III; Baudouin 1985–88, pp. 184, 188–9; Díaz Padrón 1995, vol. 1, p. 780, no. 1524; Baisier 2008, p. 236.

17 On the attribution of the figures to Frans Francken III, see Härting 1989, p. 187, and esp. p. 218, note 903, no. 2; Baudouin 1985–88, p. 186 (Frans Francken II).

18 Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium, Brussels, inv. 1730; Baudouin 1985–88, fig. 5; Heinen 1996, p. 233, note 11; Baisier 2008, pp. 236–7.

19 Baisier 2008, pp. 218–20.

20 For detail on this, see Baudouin 1985–88, p. 191; Heinen 1996, pp. 46–7 (with bibliography)

21 Baudouin 1985–88, esp. pp. 184, 188. In Grimmer's painting, by contrast, the windows may still have been completely open.

22 On the organ, see Génard 1863, pp. LXXXI, LXXXIV. The remark that the organ was moved to Diest refers to a later instrument from 1671 that is still in the Church of St Sulpice, Diest; Fauconnier and Roose, 1977.

23 Baisier 2008, p. 235.

24 The extent to which the liturgy limited the access of the laity to the choir is not entirely clear from looking at the Neeffs painting of 1658. An engraving by G. Bouttats published on the occasion of a liturgical event shows most of the laypersons at the foot of the staircase. Only a few of the faithful are kneeling on the lowest step of the second flight of stairs, and only two laypersons on the side dare to go up one step further. In that case, however, a cleric is in the process of celebrating at the altar; Heinen 1996, pp. 47, 237–8, note 34.

25 On the renovation of the altar space, see Baudouin 1985–88, pp. 190–1; Heinen 1996, pp. 46–8 (with bibliography).

26 Frans Baudouin rejected the idea of Rubens's influence on the architecture of the high altar and the staircase, because the architecture of the altarpiece is allegedly not modern; Frans Baudouin, 'Altars and Altarpieces before 1620', in Princeton 1972, pp. 45–91, esp. pp. 75, 77–9. Liess, by contrast, argued, based on Ghering's painting, for Rubens's responsibility for the architecture of the entire stairway; Liess 1977, pp. 109–16, 136–7. The close dovetailing of architecture and painting argues for Rubens's involvement. Moreover, the architecture of the altar has another modern element that Baudouin did not take into account, namely a reconstructable decoration of the outer wings accompanied with volutes on which wooden pillars or half-columns were mounted; see Heinen 1996, p. 48. See Pierre Loze, 'Le contexte historique et géopolitique dans le Pays-Bas du Nord et du Sud', in Maillet 2012, pp. 12–87, esp. p. 61: 'À l'église Sainte-Walburge, que Rubens réorganisa après y avoir placé son tableau et sa scénographie d'autel principal, on peut observer, grâce au tableau de Gheringh, une nef principale débarrassée des autels adossés aux colonnes et dont le dallage, par-de-là ces colonnes, restitue l'unité spatiale de l'église.'

Cat. 42

Abel Grimmer

Interior of St Walburga's Church, 1608

Oil on panel, 31.3 × 43 cm, signed and dated on the pillar on the right 'ABEL/ GRI[...]/ 16[08]'; the last two numbers and the signature are somewhat worn

Courtesy of Frye & Sohn, Münster

PROVENANCE

Hohenzollern Princes; Schloss Monrepos house sale, Sotheby's, Munich, 9–14 October 2000, lot 342.

LITERATURE

Baisier 2008, pp. 205–13.

Cat. 43

Peeter Neeffs II

Interior of St Walburga's Church, 1653

Oil on canvas, 51 × 61 cm, signed and dated on the right 'peeter neeffs / 1653'

Private collection, Brussels

PROVENANCE

Sir Drummond Cospatric Hamilton-Spencer-Smith (1876–1955); on loan to Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, from 1947 to 1956; Christie's, London, 5 December 2012, lot 140.

Cat. 44

Anton Günther Ghering

Interior of St Walburga's Church, 1661

Oil on canvas, 115 × 141 cm, signed 'AG Ghering' vertically on the pillar on the left and dated '1661' above the door next to the stairs

St Paul's Church, Antwerp

PROVENANCE

Formerly Paul Collection, Antwerp; probably identical with the canvas (115 × 142 cm) sold on 16 August 1814 by Entheaume Vander Vaeren and Mrs Silvestre-Vander Vaeren under no. 21, cat. B-224 and purchased by Pieter Joseph Thijs for 50 fr.

LITERATURE

Jantzen 1910 (1979), no. 156; Heinen 1996, p. 233, note 10, fig. 7 (with bibliography); Lawrence 1999, pp. 267–96; Baisier 2008, pp. 220–37; Maillet 2012, M-0403.

Hendrick Aerts

(Mechelen c. 1565/75–1603 Gdańsk)

Among the followers of the Vredeman de Vries father and son duo, Hendrick Aerts was certainly the most talented. Nevertheless, we know of at most five to seven paintings by his hand, some three of which are dated either 1600 or 1602.[1] The limited quantity of his work explains in part why Hendrick Aerts received so little attention for so long.[2] Moreover, nothing was known about the artist until he was identified as the Hendrick Aerts who died in January 1603 and whose mother, Elisabeth van Egheem, had died in Gdańsk shortly before him.[3] Given that the staffage in his works of 1602 derived from fashion plates by the Gdańsk painter Anton Möller in his *Danziger Frauentrachtenbuch* (1601), it is very likely that Hendrick was also living in that city at the time of his death.

Hendrick Aerts was born in the Southern Netherlands, perhaps between 1565 and 1575, the son of Jacob Aerts and Elisabeth van Egheem, who came from Mechelen.[4] His mother remarried in Gdańsk, her husband being a certain Rombolt van Obbergen. Hendrick must have become apprenticed to Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries when they came to Gdańsk in 1592. It would seem likely on stylistic grounds that he followed Paul to Prague in 1596, returning to Gdańsk only after Paul's departure in 1599. The great importance of Hendrick Aerts does not lie so much in the paintings that have been passed down to us as it does in one church interior that was copied in excess of 50 times by two to three generations of architectural painters in both the Southern and Northern Netherlands, ranging from Peeter Neeffs I to Anton Günther Ghering.[5] The original itself has been lost, but we know of it thanks to a print made by Jan van Londerseel (c. 1570/5–c. 1624/5) bearing the rubric '*Henderick Arts Inventor*'.

BV

Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg

(Germany c. 1637–c. 1676 Antwerp)

When on 24 July 1674 Willem von Ehrenberg gave evidence before notary Fijaecq, he stated that he was 37 years old, which would make the year of his birth either 1636 or 1637.[6] Ehrenberg bought his free mastership in the summer of 1663, shortly after his arrival in Antwerp.[7] He also became a member of the civic guard guild known as De Olijftak (The Olive Branch). As was customary, he donated one of his own paintings to the guild in 1666.[8] On 5 August 1665 he married Maria Saeys, the daughter of painter and art dealer Jan Saeys, at St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk).[9] Their sons were baptised in the same church: Lucas Willem on 18 October 1666 and Peter on 6 February 1668.[10] Peter Schubert von Ehrenberg later became a portrait painter and settled in Germany.[11]

The surname Schubert von Ehrenberg may refer to a location in Germany. In Karlsruhe, the Von Ehrenberg family coat of arms can be seen on the southern façade of the fourteenth-century Freihof. The small town of Ehrenberg[12] (in the Hessian Rhön Nature Park) lies not far from Fulda in the federal state of Hesse, and Bad Rappenau-Heinsheim contains not only Schloss Heinsheim but also the ancient castle ruin of Burg Ehrenberg.[13] The Ehrenberg name was held in the eighteenth century by a branch of the Margraves of Baden-Durlach. The first to bear the title was Christoph August von Ehrenberg (1773–1839).

Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg is thought to have died in Antwerp in 1676 at the age of 39.[14] His last known painting dates from 1673. However, in 1674 he was mentioned in a document about a painting by Gonzales Coques (1614–84), an art gallery (*kunstkamer*) picture now held at Windsor Castle, for which Ehrenberg painted the architectural elements.[15] He must have died shortly thereafter.

Apart from Gothic and Baroque church interiors – 42 examples of which are known to us – Ehrenberg also concentrated his efforts on depicting fictitious palaces and art galleries, in contrast to the Neeffs father and son duo. These works are so markedly influenced by the oeuvre of Dirck van Delen, who maintained strong ties

with Antwerp from the 1650s onwards, that it is highly likely that Ehrenberg was apprenticed to him at some point.[16] Characteristic of his interest in the architectural language of classical antiquity is the series of canvases that present the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, two of which are held at the Musée de l'Hôtel Sandelin in Saint-Omer.[17] His *Temple of Diana at Ephesus* is in fact a profane variation on the Church of the Gesù and Antwerp's Jesuit Church. Ehrenberg collaborated with various artists, such as Gonzales Coques (1614–84), Hieronymus Janssens (1624–93), historical painter Karel Emmanuel Biset (1633–c. 1710) and Hendrik van Minderhout (1632–96), a specialist in marine painting and historical works.[18] In 1672, Jacob Ferdinand Saeys (Antwerp 1658–after 1726 Vienna) became apprenticed to his uncle by marriage; he specialised in architectural paintings depicting palaces.[19] Works by Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg are held at museums in Antwerp, Brussels, Bergen, The Hague and Vienna, as well as at the Church of Our Lady of Leliendaal in Mechelen. His works usually bear the signature 'W.S.v.Ehrenberg' and date from between 1664 and 1673.
CB

Anton Günther Ghering

(Germany before 1620–1668 Antwerp)

Anton Günther Ghering was German-born but settled in Antwerp. Perhaps he drawn to the city by the fame of its architectural painters, but there may have been another reason behind his emigration. In any event, according to Van den Branden, Ghering became apprenticed to Peeter Neeffs I.[20] In view of the fact that he was registered a free master in Antwerp's Guild of St Luke only in 1662, while in his forties, it is not improbable that he had already undergone his apprenticeship elsewhere before his arrival in the city. He probably applied to the workshop of one of the architectural painters in order to specialise in that genre. He painted architectural elements for other painters on several occasions. In Antwerp, Ghering married Juliana Boderijn, with whom he had two children: Melchior Antoon, baptised on 12 October 1663, and Jan Honorius, baptised on 4 April 1667. The landscape painter Peter Gijsels (1621–90) was godfather to his first son.[21] According to Van den Branden, Ghering met with little success. He is thought to have died in 1668 in such poverty that his widow was unable to pay his death duties to the Guild of St Luke.[22] For all that, his architectural works are of exceptional quality and faithfully rendered.
CB

Abel Grimmer

(Antwerp c. 1565–c. 1620)

Abel Grimmer was trained as a painter under his father, Jacob Grimmer, a landscape specialist, but perhaps also worked sometimes as an architect, which would explain his interest in architectural painting. He may have been responsible for drafting a design for the south transept of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp. Two architectural drawings from the Santenoy Collection are thought to be by his hand: a design for a façade of the Cathedral of Our Lady and a design for a Gothic church façade. Evidently, both drawings were signed.[23] Grimmer's interiors clearly take their inspiration from Hans Vredeman de Vries and Hendrik van Steenwijck I, but they display a greater sense of realism and intimacy. Whereas Vredeman de Vries allowed free rein to his decorative impulse, Grimmer concentrated on attaining the highest possible level of realism, even in imaginary ecclesiastical buildings. One senses his training as a master builder from his precise representation of buildings and the clarity of his line. Three-dimensionality is masterfully rendered through the incorporation of light. As one of the first generation of architectural painters, Grimmer would seem to have exerted very strong influence on painters such as Peeter Neeffs I. In addition to church interiors based on Antwerp's cathedral, he also ventured to paint imaginary churches in which their predominant Brabantine Gothic is combined with Renaissance elements.[24] Around 35 paintings by him are known from 1586 to 1620.[25]

Biographical information on Abel Grimmer is scarce. He married Catharina Lescornet on 29 September 1591.[26] The following year he became a free master in the Guild of St Luke.[27] We know neither his date of birth nor his date of death. The previously proposed date of 1575 as his year of birth is completely untenable; his earliest known work dates from 1586 and, as mentioned, he was married in 1591. Consequently, we must assume his

year of birth to be more in the region of 1565. Most authors cite 1619 as his year of death. Nevertheless, a painting signed 'A. GRIMMER FE. 162[…]', in which the final figure is illegible, leads us to assume that, at the very least, he was still living in the early 1620s.
CB

Peeter Neeffs I

(c. 1578–1660 Antwerp)

The date of birth for Peeter Neeffs I is unknown. His father, Arnoldus Neeffs, an innkeeper and silk and cloth merchant, married his first wife, Margareta Verspreet, on 3 October 1574.[28] Parish registers record the birth of three children: Johannes (1576), Guilielmus (1577) and Jacobus (1588).[29] After Margareta's death Arnoldus remarried on 10 December 1589, this time to Margareta van Stavoort, with whom he had 12 children.[30] One of them was the engraver Jacob Neeffs, born in 1604.[31] The existence of two other children, Peeter and Jaspar, is confirmed in the inventory compiled by the Orphan Chamber following Arnold's death. On 24 May 1612, four children from the first marriage were still living – Johannes, Guilielmus, Peeter and Jaspar – and six children from the second marriage – Gabriel, Margriete, Cornelis, Petronella, Jacques and Elisabeth.[32] Peeter Neeffs I was born some time between 1578 and 1587, a period in which (either for mercantile of religious reasons) his parents were not resident in Antwerp. His date of birth must lie between 1578, one year after the birth of his brother Guilielmus (24 June 1577), and 1586, because his brother Jaspar was born before his younger brother Jacobus (25 June 1588).

On 30 April 1612, Peeter Neeffs I married Maria Louterbeens in the Cathedral of Our Lady.[33] Between 1614 and 1623 they had five children, two of whom followed in their father's footsteps: Lodewijck (1617) and Peeter II (1620). Famous names also appear among the godfathers and godmothers, such as Paschasia Brueghel, daughter of Jan Brueghel I, with whom Neeffs collaborated on several occasions.[34]

Peeter Neeffs I died poor. Various mortgages were placed on his house between 1641 and 1646. Moreover, in 1655 and 1656 he sold the inheritance portion from his sister-in-law, the beguine Louisa Louterbeens, and also the inheritance portion from his brother-in-law, Antoon Louterbeens, a pastor in Turnhout, from whom he had just inherited.[35] It's little wonder that he inserted an epitaph in memory of this brother-in-law in many of his interiors of the Cathedral of Our Lady. He lived off his in-laws' fortune almost all his life. Most authors suggest that Peeter Neeffs I had already died by 1656. Nevertheless, it would appear that there are some paintings by him which date to 1658[36], 1659[37] and 1660.[38]

Peeter Neeffs I has left us a particularly substantial body of work, amounting to some 400 paintings. He was mentioned at the Guild of St Luke for the first time in 1609 as an apprentice to Laureys de Cater, and acquired the status of free master the very next year, in 1610.[39] Chief among his pupils who achieved fame were two of his sons, Peeter and Lodewijck. The staffage for his works was largely provided by specialist artists: Frans Francken II (1581–1642) and Frans Francken III (1607–67),[40] Jan Brueghel I, Bonaventura Peeters and David Teniers II.[41] He also lent his assistance to fellow painters for whom he provided the architectural details. For example, Cornelis Schut probably engaged him in about 1635 for the interior of a church forming the background to *The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple*, which was intended for Mechelen's Augustinian church.[42] In the estate inventory drawn up in 1638, following the death of Cornelis Schut's wife, the artist would appear to have still owed 112 guilders to Peeter Neeffs I, perhaps for the Mechelen painting.[43]

The strict perspective devised by Hans Vredeman de Vries in his treatises was to be never-endingly repeated and manipulated by Peeter Neeffs I.[44] With few exceptions, he never departed from orthogonal perspective, running from east to west, from foreground to background, in which one of the church walls is perpendicular to the underside of the panel. Research has revealed that all of Neeffs's lines of perspective invariably end in a single vanishing point, usually on a level with the high altar. However, the creation of space was not his only consideration. Still more important to him was the interplay of light and shadow. His colour palette ranged from icy white to warm tones of beige, brown and pink. It was not uncommon for him to produce companion pieces of the same church interior, one view seen by day and the other by night, in order to show-

case all the artistic skills at his disposal. Even within a single panel or canvas, Neeffs would combine very dark naves with brightly lit side chapels. Time and again he would succeed in enlivening an austere church interior through the inclusion of a young lad bearing a torch, some candlesticks on an altar or a candle in front of a devotional statue.
CB

Peeter Neeffs II
(Antwerp 1620–after 1675)

The second son of Peeter Neeffs I, Peeter Neeffs II received his training from his father and also worked in his workshop. It is in fact very difficult to tell the work of father and son apart. There is controversy even when it comes to their signatures. His most common signature was 'Peeter Neeffs', with lower case letters, while his father signed usually with 'PEETER NEEffS'. In about 1640, Peeter Neeffs I changed his signature to 'Den Auden Neeffs' ('The Elder Neeffs') to make a distinction between himself and his son,[45] and we know of a good 16 works by the father with that signature. Around 150 paintings are attributed to Peeter Neeffs II and these date from 1636 to 1675.[46]
CB

Hendrik van Steenwijck I
(?Kampen c.1550–1603 Frankfurt)

Hendrik van Steenwijck I was born around 1550, possibly in Kampen.[47] Between 1573 and 1576 he lived in Aachen, where he became acquainted with Hans Vredeman de Vries. He worked in Antwerp between 1577 and 1585, ending his career after 1586 in Frankfurt. In 1577, following his training under Vredeman de Vries, Van Steenwijck I became enrolled at the Guild of St Luke in Antwerp.[48] He painted numerous architectural works, including several interiors of Antwerp's cathedral, and was buried in Frankfurt on 1 June 1603.
CB

Hendrik van Steenwijck II
(Antwerp 1580–before May 1640 Leiden)

According to an inscription on one of his last paintings, Hendrik van Steenwijck II was born in September 1580 in Antwerp.[49] His oeuvre is much larger than that of his father, but rather variable in terms of quality. He lived in Antwerp, Frankfurt and Aachen before settling around 1617 in London , where his work also brought him to the court of Charles I. In London, he married Susanna Gaspoel (?London after 1602/3–64 Amsterdam), who became his pupil and collaborator. Around 1632, husband and wife left for Amsterdam, where on 16 November of that year their son Hendrik was baptised. This was followed on 3 September 1634 by the baptism of a second son, Fredericus, at the Hooglandse Kerk in Leiden.[50] Hendrik died before 8 May 1640, as it was on that date that Susanna van Steenwijck, 'the widow of Hendrick van Steenwijck in Leyden', received 140 guilders, owed to her by a merchant from London.[51] Although in 1639 Susanna was mentioned once again as a godparent in Leiden, it is not impossible that the couple also lived temporarily in The Hague. In the print by Hendrik van Steenwijck II in Anthony van Dyck's *Iconologia*, specific reference is made to him as 'Pictor Hagensis' (painter from The Hague). Susanna continued to paint, and in about 1660 is thought to have moved to Amsterdam, where she died in 1664.
CB and BV

Sebastiaen Vrancx
(Antwerp 1573–1647 Antwerp)

Sebastiaen Vrancx might not be the first artist we would consider adding to the ranks of architectural painters,[52] as his multifaceted oeuvre consists chiefly of large landscapes showing battles, pillaging and fairs. He also lent his assistance to fellow artists on several occasions when they needed to populate their landscapes, interiors and other scenes with a lively crowd of people, sometimes rendered as realistically as portraits, sometimes depicted as virtual caricatures.[53] Less well known is that after 1602 he also produced some architectural works in imitation of Hans Vredeman de Vries, for whom he felt

great admiration. These were principally paintings of palaces with colourful groups of people in beautifully laid out gardens. Nevertheless, he also produced some interesting church interiors, five of which we know to have survived. Time after time, his architectural works repeat a number of characteristic features: dominant central perspective, with arches that incline inwards and walls that do not entirely conform to the laws of gravity. After his death, Vrancx was buried in the (now lost) Church of the Brothers of Our Lady (Onze-Lieve-Vrouwebroeders) in Antwerp.

This multi-talented artist's interest in architectural painting can be explained in various ways. He maintained very close contact – directly and indirectly – with both Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries. The treatises on perspective by Hans Vredeman de Vries had an unequivocal effect on Vrancx's work, and he clearly used several elements from them in his paintings. After about 1610, Vrancx was also allowed to take responsibility for populating various architectural works by Paul Vredeman de Vries, relations between them becoming closer as a result.[54] What had initially been restricted to a few architectural elements within a garden landscape expanded to become true architectural works.

Church interiors constitute a separate category. In contrast to the garden vistas, which are entirely fictitious, the church interiors almost always represent buildings that actually existed, such as Antwerp's Jesuit Church and the Church of the Discalced Carmelites, perhaps one of his last works given its date of 1647, the year of his death.[55] The genre never became his speciality. Out of a total of approximately 350 paintings and 125 drawings, there are only around five church interiors and rather more palace works. Although Sebastiaen Vrancx did not specialise in architectural painting, his interiors are of exceedingly important documentary value as they always show actual churches with clearly identifiable furnishings and paintings.
CB

Hans Vredeman de Vries
(Leeuwarden 1525/6–c. 1609 Hamburg)

Hans Vredeman de Vries, a native of Leeuwarden (Friesland), can be considered the founder of architectural painting in the Low Countries. He became familiar with the treatises of Sebastiano Serlio and Vitruvius thanks to the Dutch translations published by Pieter Coecke van Aelst.[56] His own treatises on perspective would become of key importance to architectural painting in the Low Countries, in particular *Architectura* (1577) and *Perspective* (1604). Vredeman de Vries died shortly after publishing his treatises, and after a life spent travelling around Germany and the Northern and Southern Netherlands.

This notwithstanding, he had been trained as a cabinetmaker and stained-glass artist. In September 1548 he was registered as a burgher of Antwerp to allow him to assist with the magnificent decorations that were to accompany the Joyous Entry into Antwerp of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and his son (later Philip II of Spain) in September 1549. From 1552 to 1564 he worked in Mechelen, where he became acquainted with Michiel Coxie and collaborated with Pieter Bruegel I on prints for Hieronymus Cock. In 1561, he supplied a design for Antwerp's new city hall, which was subsequently rejected. In 1564 he settled once more in Antwerp, but not for long. In 1570, he was compelled to flee the city for religious reasons, finding refuge in Aachen, where he met one of his most famous pupils, Hendrik van Steenwijck I. Consequently, it is little wonder that one of the first interiors painted by Hendrik van Steenwijck I was an interior of the Palatine Chapel in Aachen Cathedral (1573), just at the moment that Vredeman de Vries was preparing to leave Aachen and return to Antwerp by way of Liège. Steenwijck's painting of Aachen Cathdral is the very first picture to show a wholly realistic representation of an existing church. Hans Vredeman de Vries resided some ten years in Antwerp, but for financial reasons left again in 1586 for Germany, moving from one assignment to another via Frankfurt am Main, Wolfenbüttel, Brunswick, Hamburg, Gdańsk, Prague, Amsterdam and The Hague. He spent the last three years of his life in Hamburg.[57]
CB

Paul Vredeman de Vries

(Antwerp 1567–1617 Amsterdam)

The son and pupil of Hans Vredeman de Vries, Paul Vredeman de Vries specialised chiefly in depicting views of palaces and church interiors. In 1594/5, he assisted his father with decorations for the city hall in Gdańsk. From 1596 to 1599 he worked at the court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, before settling in Amsterdam in 1599. We know of some 20 church interiors by him, imaginary churches in most cases in which elements of Antwerp's cathedral can sometimes be identified.[58] Frequent elements include the *mise-en-scène* for episodes from the New Testament, such as *The Widow's Mite* or *Christ driving the Money-Changers from the Temple*.[59] Paul Vredeman de Vries probably taught Hendrick Aerts in Gdańsk and perhaps worked with him later in Prague.[60]

CB and BV

CB Claire Baisier
BV Bernard Vermet

NOTES

1 Vermet 1996, pp. 25–57.

2 Jantzen 1910 (1979), pp. 52–7; Ballegeer 1967, pp. 55–70; Daniëls 1974, pp. 63–9; Schreiner 1980.

3 Vermet 1995, based on the family tree in Cuny 1910, p. 34; Vermet 1996, pp. 25–57.

4 Vermet, 1995; Vermet 1996, pp. 25–57.

5 24 copies are listed in Schreiner 1980.

6 Willem von Ehrenberg and Remacle Serin testifying at the request of Jan Schoonjans's widow, Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Notarial Office, Notary J. Fijaecq, N 1621 (1673–78) (published in Duverger 1999, pp. 9–10, no. 3052).

7 Rombouts and Van Lerius 1864–76, vol. 2, pp. 336, 343.

8 *Chariclea recognised by Her Parents*, 1666, panel, 280 × 222 cm, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 408.

9 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 394.

10 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers, PR 53, baptismal register of St James's Church (Sint-Jacobskerk), Antwerp: 18 October 1666 and 6 February 1668; Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 394.

11 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 394.

12 D-36115 Ehrenberg (Rhön).

13 D-74 904 Bad Rappenau-Heinsheim.

14 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 394.

15 Holterhoff 1957, pp. 172–3, 182–3; Baudouin 1981, p. 8.

16 Vermet 1999a.

17 Willem Schubert von Ehrenberg, *The Temple of Diana at Ephesus* and *The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus*, oil on canvas, 51 × 53 cm and 50 × 66 cm, Musée de l'Hôtel Sandelin, Saint-Omer, inv. 0342 CD and 0343 CD.

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19 Bénézit 1999, vol. 12, p. 173.

20 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 3, pp. 55–6.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.; Bodart 1970, vol. 1, p. 295.

23 Legrand 1957, pp. 164–5; Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, p. 31.

24 Bertier de Sauvigny 1991, pp. 35, 200–1.

25 Maillet 2012, pp. 248–53, M-0421–M-0456.

26 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers, Marriage Registers of the Cathedral of Our Lady, PR 195 (1589–1612).

27 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 1, p. 300.

28 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers of the Cathedral of Our Lady, PR 192: 3 October 1574; Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 127.

29 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers of the Cathedral of Our Lady, PR 7: 10 March 1576, PR 8: 24 June 1577, PR 9: 25 June 1588. Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 127.

30 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers of the Cathedral of Our Lady, PR 195: 10 December 1589; Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p.127.

31 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers of the Cathedral of Our Lady, PR 11: 26 September 1604.

32 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Weeskamer (Orphan Chamber), WK 375, 24 May 1612, fol. 345.

33 Municipal Archives, Antwerp, Parish Registers of the Cathedral of Our Lady North, PR 33: 22 January 1617; Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 129.

34 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 130.

35 Van den Branden 1883, vol 2, pp. 130–2; Rooses 1899.

36 Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of St Walburga's Church*, 1658, oil on canvas, 57.5 × 83 cm, Sotheby's, New York, 19 January 1984, lot 3; Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of the Church of St Michael's Abbey*, 1658, oil on panel, 38.5 × 52.5 cm.

37 Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of the Cathedral of Our Lady*, 1659, oil on copper, 24.5 × 33.5 cm, Jean-Max Tassel, Quai Voltaire, Paris, in 1985.

38 Peeter Neeffs I, *Interior of a Gothic Church*, 1660, Meininger Museen, Meiningen.

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40 Boston and Toledo 1994, p. 447.

41 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 129.

42 Cornelis Schut, *The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple*, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 257 × 200 cm, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 328. Wilmers 1995, pp. 36, 76–8, cat. A15.

43 Wilmers 1995, p. 228, note 55; p. 265, note 137.

44 Lemgo and Antwerp 2002.

45 Van den Branden 1883, vol. 2, p. 131.

46 Maillet 2012, pp. 283–351, M-0631–M-1043.

47 Howarth 2009, pp. 1–17.

48 Van Mander 1936, p. 277.

49 Nicolaisen 2005, pp. 121–30.

50 Marloes Huiskamp, 'Susanna Gaspoel', *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. See www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/DVN/lemmata/data/Gaspoel (accessed 5 October 2013).

51 Oud Notarieel Archief (Old Notarial Archives) Rotterdam, inv. 328 (Notary Arent van der Graeff), deed 141, dated 8 May 1642.

52 Vander Auwera 1979; Härting 1989, p. 165.

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CD Graindelavoix

MUSIC FOR AN ANTWERP CHURCH

International polyphony from Antwerp prints anno 1600 – **73:00**

Graindelavoix – Björn Schmelzer (artistic director)
Anne-Kathryn Olsen, Alice Kamenezky, *soprano*
Razek François Bitar, Albert Riera, *alto*
Andrés Miravete, Marius Peterson, Adrian Sîrbu, *tenor*
Arnout Malfliet, Joachim Höchbauer, *bass*

Recorded at the Church of Saint-Rémi, Franc-Waret, Belgium, 1–5 February 2016
Engineered by Alexandre Fostier
Recording assistance: Joachim Brackx
Editing: Alexandre Fostier and Björn Schmelzer
Produced by Graindelavoix
Executive producer: Carlos Céster, Glossa

With the support of

Flanders State of the Art

STAD ANTWERPEN

1.
Kyrie Missa Praeter rerum seriem – a 6 – 6:48
George de la Hèle (1547–86), *Octo Missae*, printed at Plantin, Antwerp, 1578

2.
Sanctus Missa Praeter rerum seriem – a 6 – 7:21
George de la Hèle

3.
Agnus Dei Missa Praeter rerum seriem – a 6 &7 – 5:38
George de la Hèle

4.
Sanctus Missa Maeror cuncta tenet – a 5 – 4:41
Alard du Gaucquier (1534–82), *Quatuor Missae*, printed at Plantin, Antwerp, 1581

5.
Agnus Dei Missa Maeror cuncta tenet – a 5 – 5:59
Alard du Gaucquier

6.
Sanctus Missa sine nomine – a 5 – 4:35
Matthias Pottier (c. 1553–1629), *Selectissimarum Missarum Flores*, printed at Phalèse II, Antwerp, 1599

7.
Agnus Dei Missa sine nomine – a 5 – 5:46
Matthias Pottier

8.
Sanctus Missa Tota pulchra es – a 6 – 6:33
Pedro Ruimonte (1565–1627), *Missae Sex IV. V. et VI. Vocum*, printed at Phalèse II, Antwerp, 1604

9.
Agnus Dei Missa Tota pulchra es – a 6 & 8 – 5:45
Pedro Ruimonte

10.
Domine Jesu Christe – a 8 – 3:22
Orazio Vecchi (1550–1605), *Missae senis et octonis vocibus*, printed at Phalèse II, Antwerp, 1612

11.
Lux aeterna – a 8 – 2:17
Orazio Vecchi

12.
Libera me Domine – a 8 – 4:02
Paolo Bravusi (1586–1630), *Missae senis et octonis vocibus*, printed at Phalèse II, Antwerp, 1612

13.
Magnificat sexti toni – a 4 & 6 – 9:19
Duarte Lobo (c.1565–1646), *Cantica B. Mariae Virginis vulgo Magnificat quaternis vocibus*, printed at Plantin, Antwerp, 1605

Music for an Antwerp Church is the soundtrack for the exhibition *Divine Interiors*. Anachronistic? Some of the paintings of church interiors show people singing in a chapel during High Mass or at Vespers, while empty church interiors devoid of staffage suggest the reverberation of sound through space. A virtual aural dimension adds to our experience of these generally Gothic spaces and their decorative interiors. Which sounds and repertoires allow us to hear what it was like to be there? In the late sixteenth century, Antwerp's two most prominent printers, Christophe Plantin and Pierre Phalèse, published a local and international musical repertoire which in many ways matched these paintings of church interiors. These were compositions in a late style that stretched the spatial elasticity of polyphony to its limits. Just like the paintings, they suggest an affective three-dimensionality that, because of its retrospective nature, belongs as much to the Counter-Reformation programme as it does to the Baroque.

The compositions on this CD, which have never been recorded previously, were published by the Phalèse and Plantin (later Plantin-Moretus) printing houses between 1578 and 1612. They coincide with the production in Antwerp of paintings of church interiors by Abel Grimmer and the Steenwijck and Neeffs families and evoke the psychoacoustics and virtual sound quality in their paintings. The composers are nowadays largely unknown or even completely forgotten; in a sense, this recording is their rehabilitation. Nevertheless, they did enjoy a certain prestige in their own time, and some of them held leading positions as chapel masters.

One such example is George de la Hèle. He may have been born in Antwerp, was first a choirboy in Madrid, and subsequently became chapel master at the cathedrals of Mechelen and Doornik, only to return to Madrid as chapel master to the court of Philip II. Alard du Gaucquier from Rijsel was chapel master to Matthias, Archduke of Austria, when he was appointed as governor of the Low Countries in 1578. Matthias Pottier was chapel master of Antwerp's Cathedral of Our Lady between 1592 and 1615. Pedro Ruimonte from Zaragoza was chapel master and chamberlain to the archdukes in Brussels between 1601 and 1614. Orazio Vecchi from Modena was chapel master at various cathedrals in northern Italy. His pupil Paolo Bravusi, who completed Vecchi's *Requiem*, also became chapel master of Modena's cathedral in the 1620s. Duarte Lobo was chapel master at the cathedrals of Évora and Lisbon.

These composers were among what we now refer to as the fifth and final generation of polyphonists who were still composing in the style of the *prima prattica* at a time when the Baroque was also making its presence felt musically. Is there a comparison to be made between this and the paintings of Gothic church interiors so often furnished with retrospective features and decoration previously destroyed by the Iconoclastic Fury? This retrospective element is perhaps more a sort of Baroque 'in disguise': a Baroque emerging in the guise of what had been swept away forever by the Iconoclastic Fury; the Baroque as a ruin, as a memory and survival of what had been lost for good. It is noticeable, especially in the soloist passages such as the *Benedictus* of the *Sanctus*, how the composers were very much aware of new modes of expression whether via the text or through chromaticism, the strong tonal feeling and the chiaroscuro opportunities afforded by the use of double choirs, as in Vecchi's *Requiem*. The way in which pieces

were performed around 1600 also accentuates, through phrasing and ornamentation, the mannerism of this repertoire and as a result bridges the fine dividing line between two stylistic paradigms.

The *Missa Praeter rerum seriem* by George de la Hèle is part of the legendary first musical publication that rolled off Plantin's presses in 1578. The story is relatively well known. Plantin wanted to print an *antiphonarium* with the financial backing of Philip II. The funding was slow to materialise, but as he had already invested in special paper and the characters needed for a musical publication, he decided to print the Mass by the 31-year-old chapel master from Doornik. This Mass for six voices is based on the Christmas motet of the same name by Josquin des Prez. Twenty years earlier, Cipriano de Rore had composed a Mass using the same motet. De la Hèle's version follows the same tradition but should certainly not be considered inferior in terms of its monumentality and skill. Steenwijck and Neeffs often show choral formations next to an open triptych showing the Birth of Christ or the Adoration of the Magi, and De la Hèle's Mass seems to be entirely in keeping with those depictions.

The recording also includes the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* from three other Masses: one by Du Gaucquier, published by Plantin in 1581, and ones by Pottier and Ruimonte, published by Phalèse in the following two decades. These pieces allow us to make aural comparisons and hear the evolution of stylistic possibilities. Pottier is very special in terms of his idiosyncratic writing and affectivity. Gaucquier is simpler but compelling, and repeats motifs in a manner reminiscent of Josquin. Ruimonte is monumental, at times mannerist, but also melancholic and solid in a Mass based on a motet by the Spanish composer Guerrero. The three parts from the *Missa pro defunctis* by Orazio Vecchi appeared in Antwerp in 1612 and are symptomatic of the accumulation of published polyphonic requiem Masses in Antwerp in the early seventeenth century. Vecchi wrote the *Requiem* for two 'asymmetric' four-voice choirs, a higher and lower register choir, in the Venetian double choir tradition. His pupil Paolo Bravusi supplemented the *Requiem* with a passionate *Libera me* for two choirs with equal tessitura. The last piece on the CD is a *Magnificat* by Duarte Lobo published by Plantin-Moretus in 1605 and perhaps heard in Antwerp's churches during Vespers. The work has the same sober polyphonic effect as Steenwijck's paintings of Vespers.

This CD would not have been possible without the generous support of the City of Antwerp and the Flemish Government. We should like to thank Claire Baisier, who invited Graindelavoix to take part in this project and who emphasised the importance of giving back sound and psychoacoustics to paintings of church interiors. Thanks must also go to Tonia Dhaese, Nicole Van Triel, Alex Fostier, Cristina Fernandes, José Abreu, Peggy Stuyck, Sasha Kleinbart, Ria Van den Acker, Jan Corteel, Filip Van Vooren, Katrijn Degans, Willem Van Vooren, Margarida Garcia, Carlos Céster, Maria Diaz, Johan Vansteenkiste, Koen Broos, Joachim Brackx, Frederik Swennen, Luc Monmart and the parish of Franc-Waret.

Björn Schmelzer

Further reading

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Cover
Front: Peeter Neeffs I and the workshop of Jan Brueghel I, *Church Interior with Lady in Blue*, c. 1620, private collection, Brussels (cat. 16, detail)
Back: Sebastiaen Vrancx, *Interior of St James's Church, Antwerp*, c. 1632–39, private collection, Manhattan Beach, California (cat. 39, detail)

Frontispiece
Anonymous, *Interior of an Imaginary Gothic Church without Staffage*, first half of the seventeenth century, private collection, Antwerp (cat. 14, detail)

Page 4
Hendrik van Steenwijck II, *Church Interior at Vespers*, first half of the seventeenth century, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen (p. 95, fig. 2, detail)

Colophon

This catalogue has been published to accompany the exhibition *Divine Interiors. Experience churches in the age of Rubens*, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp, 17 June 2016 – 16 October 2016

Scholarly committee

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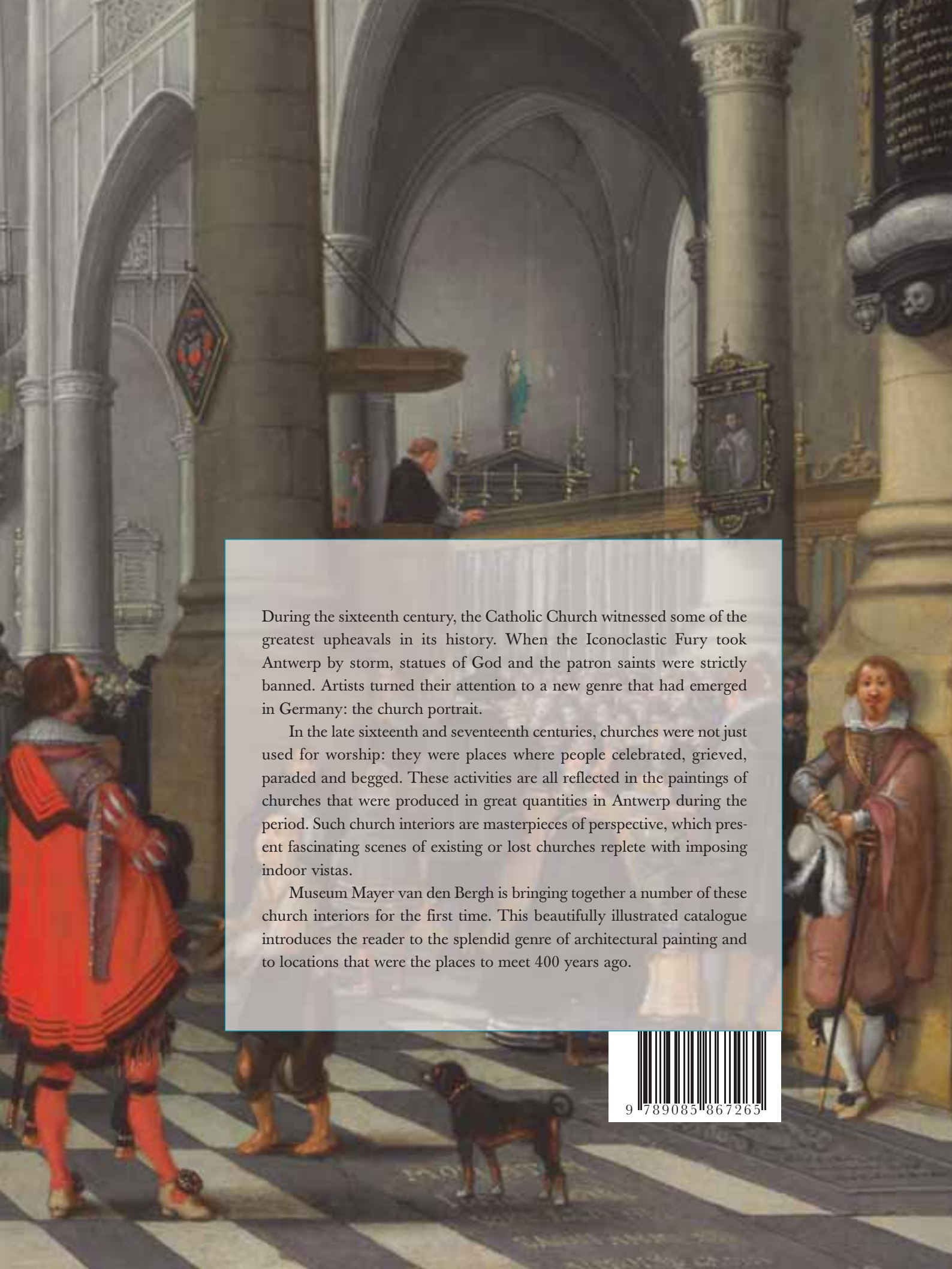

During the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church witnessed some of the greatest upheavals in its history. When the Iconoclastic Fury took Antwerp by storm, statues of God and the patron saints were strictly banned. Artists turned their attention to a new genre that had emerged in Germany: the church portrait.

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, churches were not just used for worship: they were places where people celebrated, grieved, paraded and begged. These activities are all reflected in the paintings of churches that were produced in great quantities in Antwerp during the period. Such church interiors are masterpieces of perspective, which present fascinating scenes of existing or lost churches replete with imposing indoor vistas.

Museum Mayer van den Bergh is bringing together a number of these church interiors for the first time. This beautifully illustrated catalogue introduces the reader to the splendid genre of architectural painting and to locations that were the places to meet 400 years ago.

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